
Student Work

7-1-1997

Factors Affecting Fear of Crime and Victimization of Residents in Nebraska

Melissa Megerson
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork>

Recommended Citation

Megerson, Melissa, "Factors Affecting Fear of Crime and Victimization of Residents in Nebraska" (1997).
Student Work. 2028.

<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork/2028>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Work by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.



Factors Affecting Fear of Crime and
Victimization of Residents in Nebraska

A Thesis (or Ed.S Field Project) Presented to the

Department of Criminal Justice
and the

Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Melissa Megerson

July 1997

UMI Number: EP73668

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI EP73668

Published by ProQuest LLC (2015). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

ACCEPTANCE PAGE

THESIS (OR THESIS-EQUIVALENT PROJECT)
(OR ED.S. FIELD PROJECT) ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College,
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts,
University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Committee

Name

Department/School

Chris E. Marshall

Criminal Justice

Ken L. Smith

Public Administration/COACS

Chairperson

Muon A. DeJoy

Date

July 28, 1997

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I take this opportunity to thank my committee members, Dr. Miriam Delone, Dr. Chris Marshall, and Dr. Russell Smith, for their help and support. Due to their constant support and patience, what seemed an insurmountable task has finally been achieved. A special thanks to E. David Fifer, M.P.A. and Jerome Deichert, A.B.D for their help with the data analysis. Without their guidance, the data analysis would have been nearly impossible to complete.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their support and encouragement throughout my college education. The encouragement they provided has meant a great deal to me and has helped me through the most difficult periods of college. Although my graduate experience has been challenging it has also been very rewarding. I have learned a great deal about patience and dedication.

ABSTRACT

Since the 1960's, fear of crime has increased dramatically, causing a heightened interest in the factors contributing to this problem. The purpose of this thesis is to examine factors that affect *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *actual victimization*. Data was obtained from a telephone interview of 500 Nebraska residents, 18 years of age or older conducted in 1996. Analysis of the data indicates that females and those respondents with an income of under \$20,000 have an increased level of *fear of crime*. Those respondents who were victimized reported a greater *perceived risk of victimization*. Similarly, those respondents who reported being very much and somewhat *fearful of crime*, reported a higher *perceived risk of victimization*. Finally, males and those respondents of an urban area appear to have increased levels of *victimization*. Furthermore, respondents with an income of under \$20,000 or over \$60,000, and those respondents of a younger age are more likely to be *victimization*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
History of the Development of Victimization Surveys.....	2
The Uniform Crime Report.....	2
The National Crime Victimization Survey.....	5
Review of the Literature.....	15
Organizing Perspectives.....	15
Dependent Variables.....	17
General Fear of Crime.....	18
Perceived Risk of Victimization.....	23
Victimization.....	24
Key Crime Variables as Independent Variables.....	27
Race/Ethnicity.....	27
Age.....	31
Gender.....	36
Income.....	40
Education.....	41
Urbanization.....	42
Marital Status.....	42
Density of Household.....	43
Hypotheses.....	44
Bivariate.....	45
Fear of Crime.....	45
Perceived Risk of Victimization.....	46
Victimization.....	46
Controlled Bivariate.....	47
Fear of Crime.....	47
Perceived Risk of Victimization.....	47
Victimization.....	47
Methodology.....	49
Sample.....	49
Gender.....	49
Age.....	50
Race/Ethnicity.....	50
Education.....	50
Marital Status.....	50
Occupancy.....	51

Employment.....	51
Income.....	51
Urbanization.....	51
Measurement.....	52
General Description of the Instrument and Procedure.....	52
Operalization of the Variables.....	53
Data Analysis Approach.....	59
Findings.....	60
Univariate.....	60
Dependent Variables.....	60
Fear of Crime.....	61
Perceived Risk of Victimization.....	62
Victimization.....	63
Bivariate.....	61
Controlled Bivariate.....	70
Summary.....	75
Discussion.....	76
References	
Appendix A	
Questionnaire	
Table 1 Recoding of Victimization Data	
Table 2 Expected Findings from the Nebraska Survey	
Table 3 Bivariate analysis of fear of crime	
Table 4 Bivariate analysis of perceived risk of victimization	
Table 5 Bivariate analysis of victimization	
Table 6 Gender by Fear of crime controlled for age	
Table 7 Gender by Fear of crime controlled for victimization	

Table 8 Gender by Perceived risk of victimization controlled for fear

Table 9 Gender by Victimization controlled for age

INTRODUCTION

In 1994, respondents to an *Ethnic Market Report* confirmed that crime and violence ranked high as one of the foremost problems facing our country today (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1994: 140-141). In addition to the concern for crime and violence, 40% of the respondents in a 1987 survey stated that there was an area within a mile of their home where they would be afraid to walk alone at night (Warr, 1990: 891). The public expressing concern about crime is not a recent phenomenon. Liska *et al.* (1982), state that over the previous 15 years, *fear of crime* had become an important research topic. Fear is defined as "...an emotional reaction characterized by a sense of danger and anxiety...produced by the threat of physical harm" (Garofalo, 1981: 840).

Since the 1960's, *fear of crime* has increased faster than the crime rate (Liska, 1982: 760). The *fear of crime* has been characterized as paralleling the crime rate in the 1970's. However, as the crime rate declined, the *fear of crime* stayed at the higher rate, indicating that the *fear of crime* introduces an awareness that is unlikely to dissipate rapidly (Taylor and Hale, 1986: 152). Arguably, the *fear of crime* by the public had become such a concern, that in the late 1960's the *Presidential Commission on Law and Enforcement* called for more research in this area (Liska *et al.*, 1988: 827).

One of the key concerns given the high level of *fear of crime* and fear of *victimization* is that a person could greatly alter his or her pattern of living as a

result. In the National Crime Survey of 13 cities, Garafalo found the proportion of respondents who have limited or changed their activities in some way because of crime ranged from 27% to 56% (1981: 847). Arguably, it is not healthy to fear crime so significantly, or to alter one's living habits, if that fear is out of proportion with the real crime rate. Thus, it is important to study this issue and to understand the dynamics involved in *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization*.

HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF VICTIMIZATION SURVEYS

The Uniform Crime Report

Traditionally, crime levels have been measured by using official police reports of crime. The most common measure of crime in our society comes from the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) currently compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The UCR began in 1929 through the efforts of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

The UCR requests that local police departments submit data about crime in their area on a regular basis. How that data is reported varies by each state. For instance, some states utilize incident-based reports that obtain data on each individual crime known to the police (Biderman and Lynch, 1991: 3). However, other states institute a summary system that involves reporting counts of crime known to the police (Biderman and Lynch, 1991:3). The offenses for which the

police collect data include: criminal homicide; forcible rape; robbery; aggravated assault; burglary; larceny-theft; motor-vehicle theft; and arson (Biderman and Lynch, 1991:3).

While data is collected on the counts of specific types of crime, it is also collected on the number of these reports that are unfounded, clearance rate, and crimes involving those under 18 (Biderman and Lynch, 1991:3). Other information that is reported concerns offender and victim characteristics, the monetary value of stolen property, and circumstances of murders such as type of weapon used (Biderman and Lynch, 1991:3). Finally, information is collected on law-enforcement officers killed and assaulted, as well as a count of the number of law-enforcement employees (Biderman and Lynch, 1991:3).

As views about crime changed over the years, the UCR had to undergo changes as well. Therefore, in the 1970's, and again in the 1980's, the UCR was changed to adopt and parallel views of society (Biderman and Lynch, 1991:3). The changes of the 1980's called for a major redesign of the UCR. As previously discussed, states were required to submit either an incident-based or a summary-based report. However, one particular change involved the move from summary reporting to incident-based reporting procedures (Biderman and Lynch, 1991: 3). A more uniform system of data collection allows a better comparison of crime statistics among states. There is also more information collected under the national incident based reporting system (NIBRS). Such

information would include type of victim, victim characteristics, victim-offender relationship, use of force or weapon, type and nature of injury, time, type of location, and residence status of victim (Biderman and Lynch, 1991:9). Although some of these changes have been implemented, it will take years to fully implement all the changes to the UCR system. Mary Riley, of the FBI statistical reporting unit, stated that as of June 1997 ten states are NIBRS certified (Riley, 1997). Furthermore, 25 states are in the process of testing for NIBRS certification (Riley, 1997). Part of the reason that there are not more states that are certified or seeking certification is that the NIBRS requires costly computers that some states do not have the resources to fund (Riley, 1997). The lack of resources for some states and the desire not to leave any state behind is the main reason why NIBRS will take a long time to implement (Riley, 1997).

Despite the radical changes to the UCR reporting system over the years, the system is still limited. For example, it does not cover criminal victimization not reported to the police (often called the "dark figure of crime"). There are several factors that have a role in the "dark figure of crime" as identified by Ennis (1967). The first factor is the difficulty in comparing the criminal statistics of different cities. Different methods of reporting statistics makes state-by-state comparisons difficult. The other factor that has a role in this phenomenon is crime waves. Crime waves have a tendency to appear and disappear with changes in reporting procedures (Ennis, 1967: 2). Although there is no evidence

of this actually occurring, it becomes a very probable scenario when police commanders and other police officials are under pressure to reduce the crime rate.

Along with the tendency to not report crimes to the police is the potential tendency of the police to under-report or misrepresent some of the information about crimes (Skogan, 1977: 6). Crimes may be recorded in less serious categories in order to downgrade their significance, or they could simply be removed from the official record completely (Skogan, 1977: 6).

National Crime Victimization Survey

During the 1960's a growing concern for *fear of crime* developed, to which the Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice responded. The commission initiated a series of survey studies of crime and attitudes toward crime (Skogan, 1977: 6). This series of survey studies was established in 1973 and became known as the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS).¹ The NCVS is currently conducted by the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).

The main purpose of the NCVS is to gather information about victims of crime and victimization incidents. The NCVS was specially designed to establish a more comprehensive picture of crime in the United States by measuring

¹ The National Crime Victimization Survey was originally called the National Crime Survey.

unreported crimes and incidents of victimization. Households are randomly picked for the survey and stay in the sample for a three year period (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1995: 2). The format of the NCVS is a personal interview (over the phone and in person) with household members at least 12 years of age. The interviews take place at six month intervals over a three year period (Biderman and Lynch, 1991: 3).

The NCVS is a survey conducted nationwide concerning acts of personal and household victimization the respondents have experienced. Some of the questions ask detailed information on the frequency and nature of the crimes of rape, sexual assault, personal robbery, aggravated and simple assault, household burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1995). Other questions pertain to the experience of victims with the criminal justice system, perceived substance abuse by offenders, and measures taken by victims to protect themselves from potential acts of crime (Balkin, 1979: 344; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1995). In general, the NCVS collects information on crimes suffered by individuals and households, and whether those crimes were reported to law enforcement. Estimates of the proportion of each crime type reported to law enforcement and summaries of the reasons that victims gave for reporting or not reporting are also made (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1995). The NCVS was established to gain a more accurate view of victims, offenders, and crimes.

One of the findings from early national level victimization surveys revealed that for certain crimes, respondents reported five to seven times the rate of victimization than was published by the FBI's UCR (Skogan, 1977: 7). Therefore, a substantial amount of crime remained unreported to the police. This high amount of unreported crime was an anticipated finding by researchers. It is common knowledge that there was some amount of unreported crime, how much crime was unreported and to what extent this problem existed is what researchers were looking for through the NCVS.

The first stage of NCVS program was a national survey conducted in the summer of 1966 (Ennis, 1967: 1). What is unique about this national survey, and different from the later NCVS, is that it contains an attitude and experience questionnaire (Ennis, 1967: 2). This attitude survey was administered to a random sample of both victims and non-victims, as defined by those who did not report crime within the previous year (Ennis, 1967: 2). The attitude survey contained the following *fear of crime* related questions as identified by Ennis (1967):

- How safe do you feel walking alone in your neighborhood during the daylight?
- What about walking alone when it is dark--how safe do you feel?
- How safe do you feel walking with another person in the dark?
- How often do you actually walk in your neighborhood when it's dark?
- Is there any place outside of this neighborhood, where you would not feel personally safe?
- Have there been any times recently when you might have wanted to go somewhere in town but stayed at home instead, because you thought it would be unsafe to go there?

- Some people worry a great deal about having their house broken into, and other people are not as concerned. How concerned are you?
- Compared to other parts of the city, how likely is a home or apartment around here to be broken into?
- How likely is it that a person walking around here at night might be held up or attacked?

After the first national crime survey was conducted, it was decided that the Census Bureau would also conduct surveys in 26 major cities around the United States. These city surveys were designed to produce estimates of victimization rates for citizens in certain communities, as well as to gather information about their perceptions of the crime problem, their *fear of crime*, and the impact of crime on daily activities (Skogan, 1977: 8). Therefore, the questionnaire related to attitudes that was included as part of the first national survey would only be conducted in the city surveys.

The attitude questionnaire, that was administered as part of the city surveys, contained several questions measuring respondents' attitudes about crime (Skogan, 1977: 15). Skogan identifies some of the questions examined though the attitude survey:

- limiting of activities by the respondent
- perception of crime rates in the U.S. over the past year
- parts of the city the respondent is afraid to go during the day and at night
- trends in crime in the respondent's neighborhood--whether crime is going up or down
- who commits crime in their neighborhood--if crime is committed by outsiders or by people who live there
- how safe they feel alone on the streets of their neighborhood during the day and at night
- how they compare crime in their neighborhood to other places in the metropolitan area--is it more or less dangerous than other places?

- whether they think their chance of being attacked or robbed has gone up or down in the past few years
- whether or not people in their neighborhood have limited or changed their activities because they are afraid of crime
- whether or not they have limited or changed their activities because of crime: their rating of the performance of the local police; and their most important suggestion for improving the police

As can be seen, the questions administered as part of the first NCVS and those administered as part of the city surveys are quite similar in nature. The major difference between these questions is that the attitude surveys were now conducted as part of the city surveys. However, the questions from both types of surveys were still gathering the same type of information. The city survey attitude questionnaire was randomly conducted in only half of the households (Skogan, 1977: 11). One reason that the attitude surveys were conducted this way was because the large samples that the victimization survey required were not required for the attitude survey (Skogan, 1977: 11). Perceptions and opinions are attributes that most of us possess, while victimization experiences are far less common (Skogan, 1977: 11). The second reason is that conducting the survey on smaller samples reduced the overall cost of the survey (Skogan, 1977: 11).

In 1989, the NCVS was redesigned to include information pertaining to those types of crimes that have received increased attention such as sexual assaults and domestic violence (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1995: 2).

Improvements in the methodology were made so that those being interviewed could recall events more effectively (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1995: 2).

Just as there are limitations for the UCR, the NCVS also experiences limitations specific to itself. There has been several limitations alluded to by researchers. The first involves inaccurate or incomplete information of *victimization* experiences recalled by the victim. Typically, this involves the inability of respondents to remember incidents of victimization occurring against themselves and their household (U.S. Department of Justice, 1975: 3). Another problem closely related to victim recall involves telescoping events when reporting incidents of victimization. The first type of telescoping is “forward telescoping” – the tendency to recount incidents of victimization occurring outside the time period requested (O’Brien, 1985: 51). The second type involves the recalling of incidents as occurring in the more distant past when these incidents actually occurred within the time frame requested (O’Brien, 1985: 51). The effects of telescoping can inflate the actual number of victimization experiences of a person or household, therefore resulting in inaccurate reports of *victimization*.

The second limitation involves the inability to recognize certain incidents as a crime (Department of Justice, 1981: 14). Example of crimes that are rarely reported include ordinance violations, housing discrimination, illegal treatment by government agencies, or other such offenses (Department of Justice, 1981: 14).

Associated with this inability to recognize crime is the inability of the person being interviewed to provide information about the experiences of others (Department of Justice, 1981: 14). The NCVS asks the respondent to report not only their experiences with victimization, but also the experiences of those within the household. Often times, the person interviewed has little knowledge of the experiences of others living in the household. Therefore, this inability to provide information about the experience of others in the household is a limitation of the NCVS.

A third limitation of the NCVS results in the act of forgetting incidents of victimization or not disclosing this information. Respondents edit information about incidents that may be embarrassing even though these incidents were reported to the police (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: 15). There may also be a tendency to suppress reports of victimization in order to speed up the interview (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: 15). Fatigue, impatience with the survey repetitiveness, and other factors can also affect the tendency to suppress reports of victimization (Department of Justice, 1981: 16).

The final limitation, discussed here, results in differential interview productivity. Specially, this relates to the willingness or the ability of the respondent to actively participate during the interview (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: 22). However, there is little evidence of the dimensions of this

problem or the credibility of this explanation for the variance in reported victimization (U.S. Department of Justice, 1981: 22).

Currently, city surveys are not conducted as a measure of *victimization* and perceptions and attitudes about crime. However, *fear of crime*, although not currently measured by the NVCS, is often studied by private organizations that receive funding from the National Institute of Justice. One such agency that has provided this service is the Gallup Poll Organization. The Gallup Poll Organization conducted one national survey on fear of crime. Maura Strausberg, a representative of the Gallup Poll Organization stated that the fear of crime survey conducted by Gallup Poll was funded through the National Institute of Justice (Strausberg, 1997). Furthermore, there are no future plans to study perceptions of crime by the Gallup Poll Organization for the National Institute of Justice (Strausberg, 1997). However, if funding becomes available in the future, there may be more studies focused on this topic (Strausberg, 1997).

Although *fear of crime* is not currently studied through the NCVS, it is often studied through smaller research studies, such as the one presented in this analysis. The smaller research data can vary from those surveys conducted solely for that project, while other research studies simply analyze data that currently exists. This data usually comes from larger data sets such as the NCVS or the General Social Survey conducted nationwide by National Opinion Research Center. The United States is not the only country that is interested by

fear of crime and the factors that affect this phenomena. Other countries also see *fear of crime* as an important issue and conduct surveys of their own to look at this issue. One survey that measures *fear of crime* is the British Crime Survey. This survey focuses on satisfaction with neighborhood, neighbors, and the fear of being a victim of certain types of crime (Hale, 1996: 88).

So far, we have looked at the history of victimization surveys and the rationale for development and implementation of such surveys, as well as the limitations that are imposed by both the UCR and the NCVS. Now our attention shifts to the question of the *fear of crime* increasing since the late 1960's without explanation, as stated by Liska *et al.* (1982: 760). The Bureau of Justice Statistics reported results from *The Gallup Poll Monthly*, which states that respondents' fear of walking alone at night increased steadily between 1965 and 1983. There was a slight decrease in 1989, but it has been climbing steadily with only slight variations (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1994: 167). Recently, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that the violent crime rate has essentially remained unchanged since 1992, following a slight increase between 1985 and 1991 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996: 1). This report also contends that property crime has actually been decreasing for the last 15 years (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996: 1). If actual crime rates have been decreasing, or been at least stable, then why has *fear of crime* increased?

This project will examine the factors that affect *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization* as well as those factors that predict *actual victimization* based on data collected in a statewide victimization survey. This research is unique because it addresses victimization issues in one state: Nebraska. The bulk of victimization research in this area has been conducted in large metropolitan cities, with little research focusing on the Midwest. Arguably, the Midwest is quite different from other sections of the country.

It is expected that differences in cultural norms and expectations exist between different countries, however it can also exist between regions of the United States. It can easily be noticed that cultural differences between the regions of the United States affects the kind of cuisine of that region. For instance, there is more ethnic food on the coasts than in the Midwest. This is because when settlers came over to this country, they often times settled along the coasts. Furthermore, the Midwestern cuisine relies heavily on beef and farm vegetables, such as corn. One explanation for this type of cuisine for the Midwest is that when settlers later migrated to the Midwest, farming was one way of supporting themselves. Therefore, a large portion of the food that was consumed in the Midwest was grown on farms. The differences in cuisine between the Midwest and other sections of the country is not the only aspect in which the Midwest differs from other regions. The Midwest may also differ in perceptions and attitudes about crime. Although there is no evidence of this

difference in perceptions, focusing on respondents from the Midwest could produce differences in perceptions.

This study differs from previous studies not only because of the focus on the Midwest, but also because it concentrates on three dependent variables: *fear of crime*, the *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization*. These three variables were chosen because each provides a wealth of information. For instance, *fear of crime* provides information about the perceptions of crime; specifically, the fear of certain acts. However, the *perceived risk of victimization*, although quite similar to *fear of crime*, focuses on the perception of risk and not just the fear a person may have. These are two separate issues dealing with perceptions of crime and each produces a unique set of information. For instance, *fear of crime* alone may not make a person change his lifestyle, while a person's *perceived risk of victimization* could lead to a change in his habits and lifestyle. A person could fear becoming a victim of crime, but at the same time realize that it is not likely to happen. Therefore, the *perceived risk of victimization* measures one's perception of victimization actually occurring. While the two previous variables measure perceptions and attitudes about crime, the third variable measures a person's *victimization* experience.

While these three variables have been studied in the past, there are few studies that consider the effects on all three outcomes on the same sample. One of the problems with measuring *fear of crime* is that there is not a clear

definition of this variable. Although the problems with the measurement of the *fear of crime* variable have been examined in detail it needs to be briefly touched upon. This lack of a definition has led to inconsistencies in how this variable is measured. Therefore, some research studies examining *fear of crime* measure concern for crime rather than true *fear of crime*. This concern for crime is measured separately from the true fear of crime in this study. This distinction between *fear of crime* and the *perceived risk of victimization* leads to a better understanding of these variables. It is believed that each of these outcomes affects the overall perception of crime by respondents. Therefore, analyzing all three outcomes provides for a better understanding of perceptions and attitudes of crime.

There have been a large number of research studies conducted to uncover those factors or individual characteristics that are closely related to *fear of crime* and *victimization*. Findings from these studies are often contradictory and inconsistent. Thus, continued research into this area is essential to identifying those factors that contribute to *fear of crime*. With those factors identified, the focus can shift to addressing ways to amend this problem. The policy implications of this research are clear. If the factors affecting *fear of crime* compared to actual predictors of *victimization* can be uncovered, then the *fear of crime* and *victimization* may be reduced by focusing education and support to those individuals most susceptible to increased levels.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

ORGANIZING PERSPECTIVES

There are many theories proposed to explain how the characteristics of various groups of people affect their personal *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization*. Garofalo theorizes that

“If a person has felt actual fear in particular circumstances during the past, that person is more likely to anticipate feeling fear in similar circumstances in the future: if a person anticipates feeling fearful in some hypothetical situation, he or she is more likely to experience actual fear upon encountering a comparable situation” (1981: 845).

One theory that attempts to explain *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization* is the “constrained theory”. It attempts to link the effects of *fear of crime* to the concept of an opportunity for victimization. The theory basically proposes that if victims have more *fear of crime*, or perceive their environment to be more threatening, then they tend to constrain or limit their activities to more safe areas. This reduction and limiting of behavior reduces the opportunity for perpetrators to victimize these individuals and eventually decreases their own *fear of crime* (Liska *et al.*, 1988: 828). It has also been proposed that constant worry about criminal victimization leads one to withdraw from normal social activities and retreat into the isolation of one’s home (Garofalo and Laub, 1978: 248). Stafford and Galle also state that the more time a person spends outside the home, the greater the exposure to risk of victimization (1984: 176).

The indirect victimization theory proposes that people who are more vulnerable (women, persons of lower income status, blacks, and the elderly) are more likely to be victimized or to see crime. Those who are victimized or have witnessed crime will pass this information on to other people through conversations, media, and other social channels. Those individuals who have more ties to the community and to social channels, will perceive crime to be more pervasive than it may actually be and will be more fearful of crime. In addition, those that have directly witnessed or experienced crime will also be more fearful (Taylor and Hale, 1986: 161).

The perceived disorder theory states that people are more afraid because they witness signs of social and physical decay in addition to crime (Taylor and Hale, 1986: 160). An example of this theory is that lower social class and a higher incidence of physical and social deterioration heightens the perception of local problems within an area. Elevated fear levels are a direct outcome of this perception (Taylor and Hale, 1986: 163).

The final theory to be examined here is the community concern theory. This theory builds on the perceived disorder theory, but adds several other elements. As signs of physical and social deterioration increase the residents' concern about the viability of the neighborhood and the quality of the neighbors, this concern often translates into fear (Taylor and Hale, 1986: 160). These theories and ideas are all quite similar in the idea that fear is heightened in some

way by perceptions of the environment. The variations in theories emerge when talking about specific factors that affect *fear of crime*.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

There have been numerous studies that focus on the issue of *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization*. It is important to look at these three variables because each measures different concepts related to *victimization*. Previous studies have found that individual characteristics affect these three outcomes differently.

General Fear of Crime

Hale clearly defines fear of crime as an

“...emotional reaction generated by crime or associated symbols. It is conceptually distinct from either risks (judgments) or concerns (values). Of course fear is both an effect of, and caused by, judgments of risk but to confound the two is to confuse this relationship” (1996: 92).

It is important to understand what this variable is measuring because without this awareness, the understanding of our findings will be unclear.

Now that *fear of crime* has been defined, it is important to understand why it is such a worthwhile variable to examine. Hale (1996) briefly describes some of the basic reasons for examining this variable:

“...the spread of fear and other local problems provide a form of positive feedback that can further increase levels of crime.

These feedback processes include (1) physical and psychological withdrawal from community life; (2) a weakening of the informal social control processes that inhibit crime and disorder; (3) a decline in the organizational life and mobilization capacity of the neighborhood; (4) deteriorating business conditions; (5) the importation and domestic production of delinquency and deviance; and (6) further dramatic changes in the composition of the population. At the end lies a stage characterized by demographic collapse" (Hale, 1996: 83).

While Hale (1996) briefly touches upon some of the reasons that *fear of crime* is such an important variable to study, there are other reasons that have been eluded to by other researchers. One reason this variable is particularly interesting, is because on the surface the connection between *fear of crime* and other variables appears to be quite obvious. For example, *victimization* would appear to affect *fear of crime* by increasing the levels of *fear of crime* that respondents exhibit. This increased *fear of crime* would be expected to increase the *perceived risk of victimization* felt by respondents and therefore lead to altered lifestyles for these respondents. There could also be other effects since not all factors or relationships may be known between these variables.

One interesting problem with *fear of crime* is that it is not distributed equally within a population. Further, when looked at causally, *fear of crime* only has a weak association with other key variables such as *victimization* as stated by Skogan (1987: 135). This unequal distribution of fear, as Skogan states, is because for some groups, *fear of crime* and *victimization* appear to fit together logically (1987: 135). This connection between *fear of crime* and *victimization*

means that those who have a higher victimization rate are more fearful of being a victim of crime. However, for other groups, this connection does not make sense. An example of this, often cited in research, is the heightened *fear of crime* for women and the elderly when their *victimization* rates are actually lower than their counterparts (Braungart *et al.*, 1980; Donnelly, 1988; Stafford and Galle, 1984; Lebowitz, 1975; Yin, 1985; Clemente and Kleinman, 1977). *Fear of crime* in this instance appears to be irrational because there is not a serious threat of victimization for these groups; however, they tend to fear crime more than their counterparts.

This phenomenon of the association between *fear of crime* and *victimization* for some groups but not for others, is intriguing. In fact, there is dissension among researchers and conflicting findings across studies of this issue. Some researchers find that *fear of crime* and *victimization* are highly associated. Furthermore, researchers have found the phenomena of higher rates of fear of crime for the elderly and women when there is no real justification.

One reason there are inconsistencies in the results among various studies centers on the issue that there is not a consistent definition of *fear of crime* (Hale, 1996: 80). Therefore it is somewhat difficult to compare studies that have differing definitions of the concept of *fear of crime*. This problem arises out of the fact that researchers don't have a conceptual notion of *fear of crime*, and

therefore the operationalization of this concept varies among researchers. This variation in the operationalization of *fear of crime* means that there is not a consistent methodology for victimization studies as stated by Hale (1996: 80). One example of this inconsistency is that some researchers use the individual's assessment of their risk of victimization as a surrogate for their fear. Others confuse concern for crime in society with worries about personal safety.

The concern over how this variable should be measured has been a focus of debate for researchers and centers around a number of issues and common questions posed to researchers attempting to measure *fear of crime* as expressed by Akers *et al.* (1987).

"Is fear to be measured as fear of crime in general or of specific crimes, as fear or as worry or as concern, as fear of crime without specificity or as specific fear of becoming a victim, as rational assessment of risk or as emotional fear, fear as related to everyday life or in response to hypothetical events unrelated to respondents' ordinary routine, as only attitudinal or as behavioral precautions taken against crime, as risk assessment or as perceived seriousness or crime" (1987: 495).

As stated earlier, there are differing viewpoints on how *fear of crime* should be measured. Since researchers are divided on the issue of how to measure this variable, various studies look at *fear of crime* differently and this leads to the inconsistency of results across studies and the inability to compare study results. For instance, Balkin (1979) measures *fear of crime* as concern about crime, whereas Braungart (1980) measures *fear of crime* by asking the commonly used question of "is there any area right here, that is within a mile,

where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?” This question measures actual *fear of crime* rather than concern over crime (Clemente and Kleiman, 1977: 525). Although it would seem that these two measures are closely related, they are really two separate issues. One can have concern over something happening without being afraid that it will happen. This is the difference in *fear of crime* over concern of crime. Although there is a fine line, there is a difference and this difference when used interchangeably is part of the problem in measuring *fear of crime*.

The inconsistencies in measuring *fear of crime* are not the only limitation of this research. Another limitation is the difficulty of controlling for other factors that may be affecting *fear of crime*. The effects that extraneous variables can have on research, if not controlled for, are damaging. They can impact our ability to be confident in our tests of significance.

A final limitation of previous studies on *fear of crime* has been the weaknesses in survey design (Skogan, 1987: 139). Most study samples are too small to uncover enough victims of personal crime to adequately portray a good analysis (Skogan, 1987: 139). Studies that rely on few respondents with victimization experience may be biasing their results. This occurs by relying on the responses of few, and ignores the unrepresentative sample of the general population.

The *fear of crime* variable as well as the *victimization* variable have been used in some studies as dependent variables and in others as independent variables. This is because there are factors unique to an individual that may influence *victimization* and *fear of crime* as dependent variables. Other times, prior *victimization* and *fear of crime* could be hypothesized to affect other dependent variables within a study. Therefore it may often appear that fear is used as a dependent variable and in other instances as an independent variable in research. This also holds true for the victimization finding.

Another key variable prevalent in the *fear of crime* research is the effect that *victimization* has on *fear of crime* or the *perceived risk of victimization*. In this instance, as has been explained earlier, the *victimization* variable is often used as an independent variable to test for effects on the other dependent variables. It is used as a dependent variable as well.

Perceived Risk of Victimization

How a person views her risk of being a victim of crime is important to examine. The importance of this variable stems from the idea that if a person perceives she is likely to be harmed, then it is possible that she could change her lifestyle and retreat to the safety and isolation of her home (Hale, 1996: 80). Although it would appear that the *perceived risk of victimization* is identical to *fear of crime*, there are distinct differences. The *perceived risk of victimization*

measures anxiety associated with the fear of certain acts of victimization.

However, *fear of crime* does not measure the anxiety associated with fear. For instance, a person can fear a hurricane, and at the same time realize that it is not likely to happen to her, because she does not live in an area where hurricanes are prevalent.

If a person perceives that she is likely to be victimized, would that elevate her levels of *fear of crime* and would the security of being safer from *victimization*, in turn, lower her victimization rate? These are important factors to consider, because people make judgments as to their safety. This is why the *perceived risk of victimization* is such an important variable to study. This is the only variable that can measure how respondents view crime and the likelihood of it occurring to them.

There has been some research conducted to answer the effect, if any, that this variable has on *fear of crime*, and how other characteristics affect the *perceived risk of victimization*. Although there has been some research conducted on this outcome, it has not been as fully researched as the other two dependent variables presented in this analysis. Most research has focused on the effect of *fear of crime*, rather than the *perceived risk of victimization*. This variable has important implications, as discussed earlier, and should therefore be more fully examined in future research.

Victimization

According to “Criminal Victimization, 1994” (1996), the typical victims of violent crime and those most likely to be victimized include: males, blacks, those of Hispanic origin, those under the age of 25, those with an income of \$15,000 or less, and those who live in an urban area (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996: 4). Similarly, the typical victims of property crimes are minorities, urban dwellers, and those who rent their homes (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996: 5). Those with an income of \$50,000 or more experienced 50% higher theft rates than those that earned an income of \$7,500 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996: 5). However, those with a higher income experienced less burglary (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996: 5).

Although these characteristics are very specific, they can not be taken as conclusive evidence of characteristics pertinent to one’s susceptibility to becoming a victim. Research studies need to be conducted looking at this issue, and the existing studies should be consulted thoroughly before there are any definitive opinions established. Uncovering the characteristics that predict victimization, is important to the issue of *fear of crime*. Being mindful of such characteristics will help to target those that are most susceptible to *victimization*, therefore reducing the *fear of crime* that these individuals may be experiencing or would experience in the future.

Victimization measures whether someone has been the victim of a crime or not. Examining factors that affect victimization is important to look at because with the knowledge of factors that make a person susceptible to *victimization* comes the understanding of crime and its implications for certain groups of people. This has important implications for educational programs or crime prevention programs aimed at protecting and educating those groups of people found to be most susceptible to victimization.

Past research on *victimization* has been characterized by Skogan as containing important limitations. Skogan states that past research is limited because non-victims were excluded from the majority of past research. Without this group, there is no evidence to show how victims differ from non-victims as a result of their experience (1987: 136). Most research in this area has focused on particular types of crimes or categories of victims (Skogan, 1987: 136). This focus on specific crimes and victims has resulted in not providing an analysis of either the impact of different types of *victimization* or the impact of *victimization* on different kinds of people (Skogan, 1987: 136). As Skogan states, past research has been effective in describing how particular crimes affect categories of victims (1987: 136). While the *fear of crime* variable is measured by asking certain questions which may be misleading, the variable measuring *victimization* is more straightforward.

The majority of research studies on *victimization* rely on the finding of the NCVS. One reason for this is because the sample is representative of the population and contains a large number of respondents. Therefore, the consistency that the NCVS provides makes it less often disputed as a reputable study. Although the findings from the NCVS are often cited in research, there have been smaller studies conducted on *victimization*. These studies are similar to the NCVS as they ask the same types of questions regarding *victimization*. Unfortunately, these studies are often smaller and yield smaller samples of those with *victimization* experiences. Therefore, the survey results from these smaller studies are often questionable

The victimization variable is typically measured by factors such as whether the respondent self reports being a victim of crime within a specific period of time (Akers *et al.*, 1987: 494). As with other variables, one limitation is the recall period for victims and the weakness of survey questions to alleviate this problem (Skogan, 1987: 139). One explanation of the problem of recall for victims, as described by Dillman *et al.* (1995), may be that respondents were not given enough time to think about instances of victimization. This could result in the under-reporting of instances of victimization. Another problem associated with recall is telescoping (Dillman *et al.*, 1995: 678). This occurs when respondents report acts of victimization that may have occurred outside the time period requested (Dillman *et al.*, 1995: 678). The act of victimization may have

left such a psychological scar on the respondent that she does not realize that the incident took place outside the time period. It is also believed that telephone surveys contribute to the problem of encouraging respondents to choose from among the last answers in a list (Dillman *et al.*, 1995: 678).

KEY CRIME VARIABLES AS INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Demographic characteristics such as age, education, income, urbanization, marital status, density of household, employment, gender, and race/ethnicity have been most often researched in previous studies to determine their effect on *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization*.

These factors are important to research in this area because if there is a differentiation in what factors or characteristics influence or affect *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization* then it is important that they be discovered. Once discovered, then education can be focused on these groups to help reduce their fear and potential for future victimization.

Fear of crime, the *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization* has been examined and it has also been determined why it is important to look at these factors. Now our attention must be focused on specific factors that may have an effect on these variables.

Race/Ethnicity

There are three major racial/ethnic groups prominent in the literature in this area blacks, whites, and Hispanics². It is important to know the differences in how racial/ethnic groups may be experiencing *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization*. The amount of research addressing the differences among racial/ethnic groups is enormous compared to research into other demographic characteristics. Even though a large amount of research has been conducted examining the influence of this variable, results are still characterized as inconsistent. The most significant of these studies are presented below.

Two national samples from 1973 and 1974 were combined and analyzed using a multivariate approach by Clemente and Kleiman (1977) which looked at *fear of crime*. Blacks were identified as displaying high levels of *fear of crime*, therefore supporting theories and expectations drawn from previous research which indicated that blacks have more *fear of crime* (Clemente and Kleiman, 1977: 527). One reason for the phenomena of blacks exhibiting more *fear of crime* could be that this is merely a consequence of living in areas with higher crime rates (Donnelly, 1988: 76; Parker, 1987: 492).

² Although research in this area does not differentiate between race and ethnicity, it is recognized that these are separate issues. Race is identified by characteristics that distinguish one group of people from another based on inherited physical characteristics such as skin color, blood groups, hair texture and other physical characteristics. While race pertains to physical characteristics, ethnicity is identified as a group of people that has common cultural traditions and a sense of

A study by Parker (1987) looked at race and social factors as a predictor of *fear of crime*. This self-administered survey was designed and mailed to a random sample of residents of Mississippi (Parker, 1987: 488) . The results showed that race was a determinate of fear. Specifically, blacks were more fearful than whites (Parker, 1987: 491).

A study conducted by Parker, McMorris, Smith, and Murty (1991) found that ethnicity, gender, age, and victimization were positive indicators of *fear of crime*. Those respondents who felt they were at the greatest risk of victimization also reported a higher *fear of crime*. This study used a sample from selected sections of New York: Queens, Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn. The differences in *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization* between the two largest ethnic groups in the United States--Hispanics and blacks-- were examined. The expected findings were that the victimization rates would be the lowest among the group that displays the highest level of fear.

In a study looking at the interactions of race and gender effects on *fear of crime* from a 1979 survey of eight Chicago neighborhoods, Ortega reported that age and race are related to factors which impact on *fear of crime*, mainly neighborhood crime level and perceived victimization risk (1987: 138). Ortega also suggested that in this sample, blacks were more likely to live in high-crime neighborhoods than were their counterparts, that may have an effect on *fear of*

identity. For example, ethnicity can pertain to those that have a common language, geography,

crime (1987: 138). Therefore, those respondents who put themselves in situations warranting more vulnerability tended to be more likely to fear crime or fear that their neighborhood was unsafe. However, this pattern was held more for burglary-specific fear than for *perceived risk of victimization* as reported in a study by Rountree and Land (1996: 1370).

However, in other studies, these results were not consistent. In a similar study, young black males expressed less *fear of crime*, whereas older white females express more *fear of crime* as described by a study conducted by Stafford and Galle (1984: 179). In another study examining the effect of various variables on *fear of crime*, whites were found to be more afraid than blacks (Ortega and Myles, 1987: 140). This study examined responses from a 1979 survey of eight Chicago neighborhoods (Ortega and Myles, 1987: 136). One reason for this finding is that young blacks males may be hesitant to admit fear, because it can be interpreted by others as a reflection on their manliness (Stafford and Galle, 1984: 179). Similarly, older white females may have greater amounts of fear of crime because of the social isolation of growing older (Stafford and Galle, 1984: 179).

Concerns about the *perceived risk of victimization* were more apparent among Hispanics than with blacks, as identified by Parker, McMorris, Smith, and Murty (1991). Those who reported the highest fear of crime believed they were

more likely to experience victimization (Parker *et al.*, 1991: 729). Blacks and older persons perceived their risk of personal victimization to be somewhat lower than that of whites and younger persons (Ortega and Myles, 1987: 138).

As can be seen in this review of literature on race/ethnicity findings in relation to *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization*, there are inconsistencies among research studies in this area. Some studies cite that older persons are more fearful, while other researchers report the opposite. As stated earlier, inconsistencies in findings on *fear of crime* could be related to inconsistencies in measuring *fear of crime*.

There are few local crime surveys that have focused on *victimization* and the racial or ethnic factors that may have influenced victimization. Most research relies on the findings from such a well-known study as the NCVS. Its findings are rarely challenged and are generally accepted as being an accurate survey representing respondents' views of *victimization*. Therefore, with results available from such an immense and ongoing study, it may be futile for a researcher to focus time and energy pursuing this outcome.

Age

As seen above, age often interacts with race and ethnicity. Most research reports an inverse relationship between *fear of crime* and age as was reported by Garofalo (1979) and Jeffords (1983). As a person gets older, the victimization rates decrease, yet fear of crime tends to increase (Ollenburger, 1979: 84). This

paradox is often referred to as the “fear-victimization paradox” (Keane, 1995: 432) or the “paradox of fear” (Warr, 1984: 700).

One explanation of this phenomenon is that older persons may elicit higher levels of *fear of crime* because they feel more vulnerable as they could not easily defend themselves in those types of situations (Donnelly, 1988: 76). The elderly may report higher levels of *fear of crime* if they live in particularly high crime areas as stated by Jeffords (1983: 109). However, it has also been suggested that this is not a true paradox, but rather that these groups have lower victimization rates because of their *fear of crime* and the greater cautionary steps they take (Baumer, 1978: 256; Jeffords, 1983: 104).

Ollenburger (1981) looked at various demographic characteristics and the effects on *fear of crime* and *victimization* from a 1977 survey conducted in Nebraska. Age appeared to have an important relationship to fear of crime and was the most important determinate of *victimization* (Ollenburger, 1981: 113). In fact, a linear relationship was found to exist between age and *victimization*, in which the elderly are the least victimized and the age group of 18-24 the most victimized (Ollenburger, 1981: 115). A high correlation with *fear of crime* appeared when community size and age are considered together (Ollenburger, 1981: 115). Comparable results were found in a similar study looking at age as a factor in *fear of crime*. Ortega and Myles found that older persons were generally more afraid than their younger counterparts (1987:140).

A study by Jeffords looked at the combined responses to two Texas polls on crime in 1978 and 1979 (1983: 105). What was found was that older persons were more fearful than younger respondents of walking alone in their neighborhood if that neighborhood was located in a high crime area within a city (Jeffords, 1983: 109). In a study by Parker that examined race and other social factors as a predictor of *fear of crime* for residents of Mississippi age was also found to be a strongest predictor of fear. (1987: 491).

In other research studies however, age differences were found to be less consistent than previously reported. A 1981 mail survey in Seattle found that fear was the highest among the elderly (over 66) for eight of the offenses, but the next youngest group (51-65 years) showed *fear of crime* to be highest for the remaining seven (Warr, 1984: 687). Another finding of this study showed that there are no age differences for most of the personal offenses (murder, threats, and assaults). In other words, the threat of serious personal victimization affected all age groups similarly (Warr, 1984: 691). This is important because most research supports the inverse relationship between *fear of crime* and age and, overall the age differences tended to be smaller than had been expected.

Akers, LaGreca, Sellers, and Cochran (1987) looked at the effect that community settings have on *victimization* and *fear of crime* among the elderly through in-home interviews in two retirement communities. They found that *victimization* and *fear of crime* are only weakly related to each other (Akers *et al.*,

1987: 487). The greater the concentration of elderly in a community, the less crime and *fear of crime* (Akers *et al.*, 1987: 487).

Other studies have found that older adults do not have higher levels of *fear of crime*. Regardless of the age of the respondent, 40% of a sample of Americans still reported high levels of *fear of crime* as stated in a study by Lebowitz using a 1973 nationwide survey of Americans (1975: 697). The variation between the youngest respondents and the oldest was only 5%, which is of no statistical significance (Lebowitz, 1975: 697). Age was found not to be a strong predictor of *fear of crime* as stated by Moeller (1989: 218). This finding, though contrary to the majority of the academic literature, is also supported in a similar study by McCoy, Wooldredge, Cullen, Dubeck and Browning that found that the elderly's *fear of crime* is overestimated in academic literature by (1996: 201). This study, conducted in July and October of 1986, randomly surveyed older persons in Florida examining issues related to the fearfulness of older respondents (McCoy *et al.*, 1996: 195).

Although there has been a tremendous amount of research conducted looking at age and *fear of crime*, some researchers argue that the intense focus on the profound fear of the elderly has been exaggerated. As was shown in the study by LaGrange and Ferraro (1989) the observation that *fear of crime* for the elderly is heightened has been distorted in previous studies. This study looked at responses from residents in a southeastern metropolitan area in 1987.

According to LaGrange and Ferraro, older persons experience the second lowest level of fear and the youngest respondents have a greater fear of victimization (1989: 709). Younger people reported having more fear of burglary than any other age group, as reported by Rountree and Land (1996: 1370). A study by Keane that looked at responses to a survey in Canada in 1993 indicated the younger the respondent was, the more likely that worry would be expressed about walking alone and being alone (1995: 441).

A significant study by Skogan (1987) looked at the relationship between *victimization* and *fear of crime* through personal interviews conducted in seven neighborhoods in Newark, New Jersey, and Texas (1987: 143). The findings showed that recent *victimization* was related to worry and concern about crime (Skogan, 1987: 146). A consistent pattern appeared indicating that the sum of past experiences and attitudes had an effect on *fear of crime*. Those with more past experiences with crime reported higher levels of *fear of crime* (Skogan, 1987: 146). Nonetheless, there was no evidence of an impact of *victimization* varied by characteristics of the victims (Skogan, 1987: 149). For instance, the effect of a particular *victimization* experience was the same for the elderly as it was for the young (Skogan, 1987: 150). The findings fail to support the theory that certain classes of victims should be treated differently than other groups, in the implementation of *fear of crime* reduction procedures and crime prevention techniques.

The finding of no differences for *fear of crime* based on age is contradictory to the large amount of research that indicates that age and *fear of crime* are positively related. The variation typically found in the studies conducted on this topic usually center around the influence of certain characteristics or the subsequent non-influence of these variables. For instance, age is sometimes found to have influence, but it may not have an exclusive influence. Age may be found to have some connection, but the connection is not always straightforward. For example, *fear of crime* could show a general trend of increasing with age with an exception for one group. This would show that age and *fear of crime* are related, although the relationship may not be as straightforward as was hypothesized. There is usually a finding of some characteristics having an effect rather than a finding of no characteristics of respondents having an effect. An explanation for this is that although the elderly report high *fear of crime* levels while maintaining low victimization rates, Garofalo and Laub suggest that it could simply be that the *fear of crime* questions are evoking concern for the community rather than the actual *fear of crime* (1978: 250).

Although there is little research conducted on the *perceived risk of victimization* and age, it needs to be addressed. Ortega and Myles found that older persons *perceived their risk of victimization* as higher than their counterparts (1987: 138). Age was found to be a marginal predictor of *perceived*

risk of victimization. Rountree (1996), as well as LaGrange and Ferraro (1989) state that perceived risk is not strongly related to age (1996: 708).

Another issue that requires further research is *victimization* and age. The NCVS results of factors affecting *victimization* are generally accepted by researchers. One reason is because it is a national survey that has been found to be a good measure of respondent's *fear of crime* and *victimization*. Therefore, few researchers conduct studies on factors that may effect *victimization*. Accordingly, throughout the remainder of the discussion of the independent variables, it should be recognized that research in this area is scarce.

Gender

Gender has been one of the most consistent findings among the independent variables, and it is an important and intriguing issue to examine. The differential socialization of the two gender types could be a plausible reason for explaining gender differences on a variety of issues. It could also be used as an explanation for *fear of crime* and the *perceived risk of victimization*.

Gender was identified as being a strong predictor of fear as reported by Clemente and Kleiman (1977: 527). Females were found to display significantly more fear than males (Clemente and Kleiman, 1977: 527). This finding is also supported in a similar study in which women were more likely than men to say they were afraid of walking alone at night (Lebowitz, 1975: 698). The factors affecting *fear of crime* were examined by Garofalo (1979) with special attention

to how a *perceived risk of victimization* and an experienced *victimization* affect *fear of crime*. It should be noted that in this study *perceived risk of victimization* and *victimization* was utilized as independent variables to explain differences in *fear of crime*. These variables are often used as dependent variables, and at other times are used as independent variables. What was discovered was that there is an inverse relationship between *fear of crime* and gender. Males have a higher *victimization* rate, whereas females have a higher *fear of crime* rate (Garofalo, 1979: 85).

The utility of various demographic variables including gender as predictors of *fear of crime* were examined by Moeller (1989). The findings showed that women were much more likely to report *fear of crime* than men. In fact, the percentage difference between the two gender types was 33% (Moeller, 1989: 218). Females exhibited a higher *fear of crime* than males for most offenses in a study conducted by Warr (1984). The three offenses for which females did not exhibit higher *fear of crime* levels were: contaminated food, drunken drivers, and fraud (Warr, 1984: 687). Overall, it was shown that gender differences in fear do persist among types of offenses (Warr, 1984: 687). One explanation posed was that "...most of the variation in fear among the ...sex groups is due to differences in the relationship between fear and perceived risk within those groups" (Warr, 1984: 694).

Another study also reported that gender was the most consistent and powerful predictor of fear (Baumer, 1978: 260). Women were found to be considerably more fearful of personal crimes than men (Baumer, 1978: 260). Over 56% of women and 18.4% of men, in a study conducted by Will and McGrath using data from a 1987 survey exploring neighborhood fear, reported *fear of crime* (1995: 169). As can be seen, there is a significant variation between the two gender types.

Gender differences in *perceived risk* and *fear of crime* were also examined by LaGrange and Ferraro (1989). They found that women reported a significantly greater *perceived risk of victimization* and *fear of crime* than men (LaGrange and Ferraro, 1989: 714). Those respondents who perceived they were at a high risk of *victimization* exhibited more *fear of crime* than those who perceived that they were at a low risk. (LaGrange and Ferraro, 1989: 704; Parker *et al.*, 1991: 729). This is one possible explanation for the *fear of crime* in women being elevated. In a different study, *fear of crime* and *perceived risk of victimization* was investigated to provide further support for past research. The study showed was that gender was associated to *fear of crime*, and gender was associated to *victimization* (Parker, McMorris, Smith, and Murty, 1991: 727).

Braungart, Braungart, and Hoyer examined the characteristics of age, gender, social factors, and *fear of crime* as each of these factors related to each other (1980). The data was drawn from a nationwide survey and included 1,499

respondents (Braungart *et al.*, 1980: 57). Gender appears to have a significant impact on *fear of crime* as many other studies had indicated. Women were more afraid than men, and there were only slight increases in fear by age (Braungart *et al.*, 1980: 59).

Although women report more *fear of crime* than men, Garofalo and Laub suggest that it could be because the survey questions elicits concern for the community rather than measures true *fear of crime* (1978: 250). It is also suggested that women report higher levels of fear of crime because they feel they could not easily defend themselves in such situations (Donnelly, 1988: 82).

Race/ethnicity, age, and gender are the most highly examined of the independent variables discussed. So far, race/ethnicity has been looked at and found to have some inconsistencies in the results. Age had more consistent results stating that as age increases *fear of crime* also increases and *victimization* subsequently decreases. Finally, gender was examined and the results were overwhelming consistent among the various studies mentioned. Females were found to have more *fear of crime* than their victimization rates warrant. *Perceived risk of victimization* has been researched, but to a lesser extent than *fear of crime*. Therefore, the results are extremely inconsistent and there is not enough studies to adequately compare contrary findings.

The remaining independent variables examined are researched less often than those previously stated. This is why it is particularly important to examine

their influences. Since research studies have not found these variables warranting of examination, there is little consistent information as to how they affect *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization* rates among respondents.

Income

On the surface, income would appear to have a significant effect on *fear of crime* and *victimization*. It would be expected that those who earn less money and live in lower income areas are more susceptible to *victimization*, and this would lead to increased levels of *fear of crime*, further *victimization*, and a greater *perceived risk of victimization*. Those respondents in higher income brackets have the lowest rate of *victimization* as identified by Clemente and Kleiman (1977: 523). This low rate is generally attributed to the idea that those in higher income brackets can afford to live in more affluent neighborhoods and to invest in devices that ensure security (Clemente and Kleiman, 1977: 523).

Similiarly, those of lower socioeconomic status were identified as more likely to worry about walking alone and being alone (Keane, 1995: 449). This finding is supported in a study by Akers *et al.* which stated that those respondents of a higher income status exhibited less *fear of crime* than their counterparts (1987: 499). Income was found to have a significant negative effect on *perceived risk of victimization* in a study conducted by Rountree and Land (1996: 1370). However, as has been seen with previous variables, there is some

dissension in the research. Moeller suggests that income is not a strong predictor of *fear of crime* (1989: 217).

Education

Those respondents with less education were more likely to express fear of walking alone and fear of being alone at night in a study conducted by Keane (1995: 441). This finding is also supported in a study by Akers *et al.*, which indicated those of a higher educational level exhibited less *fear of crime* than their counterparts (1987: 499). This variable is generally believed to have a significant impact on fear because those who are better educated generally live in lower crime areas because of the resources available to them. Education does have an effect on *fear of crime* as stated by Donnelly, in which 241 residents of Ohio were interviewed (1988: 83). The findings indicate that those who are better educated are more fearful (Donnelly, 1988: 83). Donnelly suggests that the *fear of crime* by the better educated may be an indication of unemployment within the community and the inability to control the unemployed or other external factors that affect the community (1988: 83).

The finding of the lack of affect of education was identified in a study conducted by Baumer looking at various factors and their affects on fear (1978: 257). Various variables were examined to clarify or support past research into their viability as factors affecting *fear of crime* by Moeller (1989). One variable was education, which past research has reported inconclusive evidence

regarding its impact on *fear of crime*. Education is not a strong predictor of *fear of crime* as described by Moeller (1989: 217). This finding is hard to explain because it is typically thought that those better educated make the income that allows them to live in lower crime areas. However, this study indicates that this explanation may not be wholly explanatory of the influence of this variable on *fear of crime*.

Urbanization

This variable would appear to be highly correlated with education and income. However, as it has already been stated, these two variables have not been shown to have an effect on fear. The location of the respondent's place of residence was the most influential of all the demographic variables as indicated by a study conducted by Keane in 1993 examining responses to a Violence Against Women Survey in Canada (1995: 441). One explanation for this is that people tend to group themselves by social class and those who live in high crime areas are generally of a lower social status as identified by Baumer (1978, 257). However, in another study, residential location was not found to affect the respondent's estimate of risk of victimization or *fear of crime* as reported by Lee in a 1980 survey of older persons in Washington State (1982: 662).

Marital Status

Those respondents of a single status were more likely to express worry about walking alone, whereas those of a married status were more likely to

express concern about being alone as stated by Keane (1995: 441). Marital status as one variable affecting *fear of crime* was examined by Braungart, Braungart and Hoyer (1980). What was expected, was that various social factors combined with other factors such as age, and gender would produce immense differences in *fear of crime*. What was discovered was that the most fearful were those elderly men and women who had never married (Braungart *et al.*, 1980: 60). Akers *et al.*, also identified those unmarried elderly respondents as expressing more *fear of crime* however, in their analysis this was not believed significant (1987, 499).

Density of Household

Marital status and density of household are quite similar in what they measure. Both variables basically measure if the respondent lives with others. While marriage does not always indicate that a person lives with others, it is often the case. In previous studies, it was found that marital status did have an effect on fear. Therefore, since density of household is such a similar factor, it would be expected to also have similar results. Living alone, for any age group, contributes to fearfulness as reported in a study by Lebotwitz (1975: 698). The differences between those under the age of 40 who were living alone and those who lived with others were small compared with 60 or older who lived alone (Lebowitz, 1975: 698). What was discovered was that for females, living alone is one factor that contributes greatly to fearfulness as stated by Braungart,

Braungart and Hoyer (1980: 61). Those who live alone were identified as expressing more *fear of crime* in a study by Akers *et al.*, although density of household was not believed significant (1987: 499). Those persons living alone may feel more vulnerable and report higher levels of *fear of crime* because they do not have others to count on if such situations would arise (Donnelly, 1988: 82).

Presented so far have been a detailed description of the literature surrounding each of the independent variables that will be analyzed in this study. As noted earlier, the results of research in this area are often inconsistent for a variety of reasons that were previously examined. Continued research into this area is essential to determining the accuracy of results. Therefore, presented below is a description of a study and the subsequent findings.

HYPOTHESES

It has been stated that *fear of crime* has increased greatly over the years without any known reason. This is alarming to researchers because *fear of crime* and *victimization* is a fear that can greatly alter one's lifestyle. This could have dramatic effects for certain groups of people who have characteristics that make them susceptible to increased *fear of crime* and *victimization*. Therefore, this is why *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization*, in relation to other types of variables have been thoroughly examined. The

variables that affect the outcomes and the affect that one outcome may have on another is also of great concern.

A review of the literature surrounding *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization* has elicited some basic hypotheses which the present study will discuss in relation to the results that are found in the analysis. Respondent characteristics may influence the way a person responds to the questions “How fearful are you of being the victim of a violent crime?” This is particularly important because if a person is extremely fearful of crime, then she could change her lifestyle which could lead to a withdrawal from normal activities.

An attempt will be made to further understand how and to what extent different demographic characteristics are related to *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization*. An attempt will also be made to determine the amount of influence each of these demographic characteristics have. Due to the lack of research examining the Midwest and its respondents, these findings here may prove useful, but will only be preliminary as much more research will need to be conducted in order for findings to be conclusive.

In summary, this thesis offers several hypotheses for each of the three dependent variables to be examined.³ They are as follows:

³ Consult table 2 for an overview of the hypotheses.

FEAR OF CRIME - BIVARIATE HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis I: Gender

Females will be more likely to report a higher level of fear of crime than males.

Hypothesis II: Education

Respondents educational level will not have an effect on fear of crime.

Hypothesis III: Live

Respondents that live in an urban area will be more likely to report higher fear of crime levels than respondents that live in non-urban areas.

Hypothesis IV: Marital Status

Respondents of a unmarried status will report a higher fear of crime level than respondents that are married.

Hypothesis V: Occupants

Respondents that live alone will be more likely to report higher fear of crime levels than respondents that live with others.

Hypothesis VI: Income

Respondents who have a lower monthly income will be more likely to report higher fear of crime levels than respondents with higher incomes.

Hypothesis VII: Employment

Respondents who are unemployed will exhibit a higher fear of crime level than respondents that are employed.

Hypothesis VIII: Age

Respondents of an older age will report a higher level of fear of crime than respondents of a younger age.

Hypothesis IX: Victims

Respondents that have had prior experience with victimization, will have a higher level of fear of crime than respondents who have not been victims of crime.

PERCEIVED RISK OF VICTIMIZATION - BIVARIATE HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis X: Gender

Gender has no effect on the perceived risk of victimization than females.

Hypothesis XI: Education

Educational level will not have an effect on perceived risk of victimization.

Hypothesis XII: Live

Respondents that live in an urban area will be more likely to perceived their risk of victimization as higher than respondents who live in non-urban areas.

Hypothesis XIII: Marital Status

Respondents of a married status will view their perceived risk of victimization as lower than respondents who are single.

Hypothesis XIV: Occupants

Respondents that live alone will view their perceived risk of victimization as higher than those that live with others.

Hypothesis XV: Income

Income will not have an effect on perceived risk of victimization.

Hypothesis XVI: Employment

Employment status will not have an effect on perceived risk of victimization.

Hypothesis XVII: Victim

Respondents who have been a victim of crime will perceive their risk of victimization as higher than those who have not been a victim of crime.

Hypothesis XVIII: Fear of Crime

Respondents who have a great fear of crime will perceive their risk of victimization as higher than those who have a lower fear of crime.

Hypothesis XXIV: Age

Age will not have an effect on perceived risk of victimization.

VICTIMIZATION - BIVARIATE HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis XX: Gender

Males will be more likely to experience victimization than females.

Hypothesis XXI: Education

Educational level will not have an effect on victimization.

Hypothesis XXII: Live

Respondents that live in an urban area will be more likely to experience victimization than respondents of non-urban areas.

Hypothesis XXIII: Marital Status

Respondents of a unmarried status will experience a higher victimization rate than respondents who are married.

Hypothesis XXIV: Occupants

Respondents that live alone will be more likely to experience victimization than respondents that live with others.

Hypothesis XXV: Income

Respondents with a lower income will experience a higher rate of victimization than respondents of a higher income.

Hypothesis XXVI: Employment

Employment status will not have an effect on victimization.

Hypothesis XXVII: Age

Respondents of an older age will experience a lower victimization rate than respondents of a younger age.

FEAR OF CRIME - CONTROLLED BIVARIATE HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis XXVIII: Gender and Fear of Crime by Age

Older aged women will fear crime more than women of a younger age.

Hypothesis XXVIV: Gender and Fear of Crime by *Victimization*

Women who have been victimized will fear crime more than men who have been victimized.

PERCEIVED RISK OF VICTIMIZATION - CONTROLLED BIVARIATE HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis XXX: Gender and Perceived risk of victimization by Fear of Crime

Females who fear crime will have a higher perceived risk of victimization than males who fear crime.

VICTIMIZATION - CONTROLLED BIVARIATE HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis XXXI: Gender and Victimization by Age

Young males will experience more victimization than young females.

These hypotheses are important in understanding the connections between the variables that are being looked at. The theories discussed earlier are reflected in the hypotheses statements proposed. For example, the indirect victimization theory states that those who are more vulnerable are more likely to be victimized. However, from the review of the literature, it was found that those who are the most vulnerable are not usually those who are the most victimized. Males are more likely to be victimized, for example, whereas females are more vulnerable. The hypothesis statements of *victimization* are in accordance with the results from a large amount of literature rather than from what the indirect victimization theory proposes. The theory seems to indicate that those who are victimized will pass on their experiences through the media or word-of-mouth to those who have not. Therefore, the hypothesis statements for *fear of crime*

indicate that there is a higher *fear of crime* level expected for women and the elderly, who normally have more ties to the community.

The perceived disorder theory is tested in the hypotheses statements that declare that those of a lower income, and the unemployed, and those who live in urban areas will exhibit more *fear of crime*. It is believed that these groups are more likely to see signs of social and physical decay because they live in areas that have fewer resources. Those who acquire higher incomes are less likely to see the extent of the decay because they are believed to live in better areas. The perceived disorder theory would also apply to those groups of people who indicate a greater *perceived risk of victimization*. It is therefore hypothesized that those who live in an urban area, and those who are non-white, will perceive their risk of victimization as higher than their counterparts because they witness more signs of physical and social decay within their neighborhoods.

The last theory examined is the “community concern theory”, and it is tested through the same hypotheses statements as the perceived disorder theory. It uses the same hypotheses statements because the two are nearly identical with only small variations. For example, the community concern theory builds upon the perceived disorder theory with the exception that the physical and social deterioration increases concern about the viability of the neighborhood and the quality of the neighbors. This concern for the community, translates into fear.

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

The Nebraska Victimization Survey (NVS) was conducted to measure the extent of victimization and fear of crime among Nebraska residents.⁴ The survey was conducted by telephone in 1996.⁵ A professional telephone research company chose a random sample of 500 Nebraska residents 18 years of age or older for the interviews. Table 1 describes the characteristics that were examined and the percentage of responses to the NVS.

Gender. The 1990 Census data for the state of Nebraska reports that 48.0 percent of the population in Nebraska is female. However, the NVS data states that 56.2 percent of respondents are female. A difference of around five percent between respondents of the NVS and those residents in Nebraska exist. Furthermore, this difference is small enough to warrant the sample as being representative of gender within the state of Nebraska.

Age. It is difficult to indicate whether the NVS sample is representative according to the variable of age. The 1990 Census data reports the median rather than the mean age of residents of the state of Nebraska.

Race/Ethnicity. The 1990 Census data reports that 7.5 percent of the population in Nebraska is minority. However the NVS data reports that 2.6 percent of the respondents are minority. Therefore, with only a difference of five percent, it can

⁴ This survey also attempts to determine how familiar Nebraska residents are with victim services and how many had received help from them.

be concluded that the NVS sample is representative of the state of Nebraska. However since there were very few respondents of a nonwhite status, it is difficult to conduct a credible analysis of this variable. Because of this, the variable will not be examined in further data analysis.

Education. The 1990 Census data for the state of Nebraska reports that 76.4 percent of the population of Nebraska have a high school degree or less. However, the NVS data states that 48.2 percent of respondents have a high school degree or less. Therefore, it would appear that according to the variable of education, the NVS is not representative of the population of Nebraska.

Marital Status. The 1990 Census data reports 58.2 percent of households composed of married couples. However, the NVS data states that 71.1 percent of respondents are married. This variable may be over-represented.

Occupancy. The 1990 Census data for the state of Nebraska does not give a percentage for comparison with the NVS data; however, the Census does report that the average number of persons per household is 2.54. The NVS data reports that 89.7 percent of respondents indicated they lived with others. This would indicate that the NVS data is representative of the state of Nebraska.

Employment. There is a 2.7 percent difference between the NVS data and the 1990 Census data for the state of Nebraska. This difference is small enough to

⁵ Appendix A contains instrument used in this study.

indicate that the sample is still representative of employment status across in the state.

Income. The 1990 Census data for the state of Nebraska indicates that the median household income in 1989 was \$26,016. However, the NVS reports the average income. As with the variable of age, this figure can not be compared with the NVS because of this difference.

Urbanization. The 1990 Census data reports that 66.1 percent of residents in the state of Nebraska live in an urban area. Furthermore, the NVS sample reports that 62.0 percent of respondents live in an urban area. Therefore, it is concluded that this sample is representative of urbanization within the state of Nebraska.

There are some limitations to the sample and the way it was conducted. The selection of location for the study is one limitation. Although using one state as a basis for a study can often be an advantage (because of few research studies looking at those particular respondents) it can also be a limitation because it limits the amount of diversity within the sample. Nebraska differs little in its diversity among the racial/ethnic category. Therefore, the minority respondent population is very limited in this study and is not a representative sample of the minority population.

The size of the sample is another concern. There were only 500 respondents. Therefore, there were few respondents who had victimization

experiences. The sample size for the dependent variables of *fear of crime* and *perceived risk of victimization* was adequate, but the variable of *victimization* requires a much larger sample. Although this has been discussed previously for victimization surveys in general, it needs to be reiterated. The study of victimization requires a much larger sample because few respondents have had this experience. A smaller sample reflects on the experiences of a few to generalize to the experiences of the larger population.

The last limitation dealing with the sample concerns the selection of the sample. In the present study, the selection was conducted through a contracted company. Although this company has a protocol for generating a random sample of respondents, its results are questionable since the sample was not generated by those working directly with the study.

MEASUREMENT

General Description of the Instrument and Procedure

The Nebraska Victimization Survey is divided into several parts based on the types of questions asked (see Appendix A). The first part deals with *fear of crime* issues and how concerned one is that a particular act might occur. The next section of questions is related to particular acts of victimization actually experienced by the respondent within the last year. The third section deals with victim agencies and what services were received from these agencies. A set of situational questions aimed at describing the last victimization occurrence were

also asked, the final section included demographic questions. Throughout this analysis, the first and second part as well as the situational questions will be analyzed. The section dealing with victim services will not be examined because the focus of this study on of *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization*.

Operationalization of Variables

The dependent variable for fear of crime was measured by the response to the following question:

1. How fearful are you of being the victim of a violent crime?

This question was chosen because it specifically pertained to fear of crime. It was believed to be a good measure of *fear of crime*, as the question is straightforward, making the original idea of a scale variable for fear of crime unnecessary. The four response categories to this question were: very much, somewhat, rarely, and never.⁶

Although this question is straightforward, there are other questions on the survey that could have been used to estimate the respondent's experience. One

⁶ The use of a scale variable for fear of crime was not used because the use of the question, "How fearful are you of being the victim of a violent crime?", is straightforward regarding fear of crime. There is debate among researchers about asking particular types of questions aimed at fear of crime, such as: "Is there an area right around here where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?" The debate revolves around whether these types of questions are tapping actual fear of crime or concern about crime. By using the question stated above there is no question about whether fear of crime or concern of crime is being measured. Therefore, the use of a scale variable would be unnecessary

question, “Is there an area right around here, that is within a mile, where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?”, is one of the most common measurements for *fear of crime*. In using a less commonly asked question than was used in previous studies there was created the possibility of not being able to compare results across studies. However, this does not appear to be a significant problem as both questions are gauged at measuring actual fear rather than concern about crime.

The second dependent variable that will be examined is the *perceived risk of victimization* felt by the respondents. The dependent variable *perceived risk of victimization* variable will be constructed by creating a scale from the following eight questions that follow the phrase: Do you think any of the following are likely to happen to you during the next year?⁷

1. “someone breaking into your home and taking something or attempting to take something”
2. “someone stealing or attempting to steal a motor vehicle belonging to you”
3. “someone stealing other property or valuable things belonging to you”
4. “someone taking something from you by force or threat of force”
5. “someone beating or attacking you with a knife, gun, club or other weapon”
6. “someone threatening you with their fist, feet or other bodily attack”
7. “someone forcing you to have sexual intercourse with them against your will”
8. “being beaten or attacked by a member of your family or someone in your household”.

The response categories for this question are: yes/no. The scale will be created on a range that consists of a 0 to 7 scale. Each time the respondent answered affirmatively to a *perceived risk of victimization* question, she will

received one point. If a respondent answered negatively to all eight questions then they would receive a score of zero; however, if a respondent answered affirmatively to all eight questions, she would receive the highest scale rating of seven. This scale will determined the amount of risk respondents feel they are exposed to on a recurring basis.

The last dependent variable that is important to look at is *victimization*. What factors predict and how these factors compare with the factors impacting *fear of crime* and the *perceived risk of victimization* will be examined. There were nine questions directed at specific acts of violence the respondent may have encountered. These questions were measured by the yes/no response.⁸

These questions were:

1. "Did someone take something directly from you by using force?"
2. "Did anyone threaten to beat you up or threaten you with a knife or other weapon?"
3. "Did anyone hit you, attack you or beat you up?"
4. "Did anyone force you, or attempt to force sexual intercourse with them?"
5. "Did anyone force you, or attempt to force unwanted sexual activity?"
6. "Did anyone try to attack you in some other way?"
7. "Did anyone break in or try to break into your car, truck, or home?"
8. "Did anyone damage, steal or try to steal something that belonged to you?"
9. "Were you the victim of an automobile crash involving a drunk driver?"

The third dependent variable, *victimization*, will be coded 0 for respondents who answer no to all of these questions, while respondents who answer yes to **any** of the questions will be coded 1. Those respondents who are

⁷ See Appendix A for the complete version of the survey questionnaire

⁸ See Appendix A for the complete version of the survey questionnaire.

coded 0 will be considered non-victims, while those who are coded 1 will be considered victims.

The independent variables will consist of the demographic variables of race, age, gender, income, education, urbanization, marital status, present employment, and density of household, and will be used for all three dependent variables.⁹

Several of the demographic variables within this study required some adjustments or recoding to the responses originally given.¹⁰ The recoding for some variables merely reflected an adjustment of the numbers assigned to the responses for purposes of using multiple regression. For example, the variable gender was originally coded as a 1 or a 2. However, to perform multiple regression, the numbers assigned to the responses were changed to 0 and 1.

Other demographic variables required more extensive recoding. One example is the race/ethnicity variable. This variable was changed to reflect categories of white and non-white. Therefore, those respondents of African American, Asian, Native American, Hispanic, and other racial/ethnic groups, were recategorized into the non-white group. Those respondents who were Caucasian remained in the white group. This variable was recoded to mirror past research in this area. Another reason this variable was recoded was simply because there were so few respondents in the non-white group. It would be

⁹ See Appendix A for the complete version of the survey questionnaire

more difficult to determine the differences among responses with so many categories and so few respondents.

Education was another variable that required additional recoding. Some of the same problems with the race/ethnicity variable appeared with this variable as well. For instance, there were several categories of education that the respondent could indicate. However, increased categories of possible responses increased the likelihood that the original effect would be diminished or dissipated among the groups because of the extensive list of categories. The general tendency of the categories was to indicate some level of college or less. Therefore, after several attempts at recoding this variable, it was determined that this variable should be recoded as high school or less, and some college. Accordingly, those respondents who indicated grade 8 or less, high school, technical degree, and other were recoded into the high school or less category. Those respondents who indicated undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees were recoded into the some college category.

Urbanization was recoded to reflect the categories of urban and non-urban. The problem with this variable, prior to recoding, was simply that the categories were confusing. It was difficult for respondents to determine if they lived in a town away from an urban area or in a suburb of an urban area. It was

¹⁰ See Table 1 for a complete listing of the recoding of the independent variables.

felt that this variable should reflect past research in this area as well as clarifying the responses to this question.

Marital status was recoded to reflect the categories of married and unmarried. Although the original categories seemed appropriate, it was believed that there were few differences between being single and divorced because these categories indicated living alone or without a spouse. Therefore, the categories of widowed, divorced/separated, and single were recoded to the category of single. Those who indicated a married status remained in that category, as well as those who refused to answer.

Another variable that required some recoding was occupancy. This variable measured how many people lived in the household with the respondent. The initial categories included living alone, or living with up to four others. However, in order to simplify the results, the recoding reduced the categories to living alone and living with others.

Income was recoded because the categories were not interval categories. The multiple regression analysis would not be accurate. Specifically, the categories ranged from differences of \$10,000 to differences of \$20,000 between categories. Multiple regression does not have the capability to indicate differences between categories of responses; it can only identify interval differences. Therefore, the categories of under \$10,000 and the category of

\$10,000-\$20,000 were combined in order to mirror the \$20,000 difference between the remaining categories.

The final variable that required recoding was the variable of employment. The problem of too many categories that was evident in many of the previous variables was also a problem for the present variable. There were initially seven categories with few responses in each category. The hypotheses indicated differences would be expected between those employed and unemployed. The categories were recoded to reflect this. Those indicating employment full time and part time were recoded into the employed category. Those who indicated responses of “homemaker”, “student”, “unemployed”, and “retired” were recoded into the “not employed” category. Finally, those who indicated an other response were recoded as missing.

The questions used to predict *victimization* are questions 14 through 22.¹¹ In addition, we will explore the impact of *fear of crime* on the *perceived risk of victimization*. Finally, this study will explore the impact of *victimization* on *fear of crime*. In some cases, the dependent variables will also be looked at to explain possible differences in the other dependent variables. For example, the dependent variable of *victimization* will be looked at to determine the effect that it may have on *fear of crime* levels. Therefore, in some instances the dependent variables, may be used to predict the remaining dependent variables.

¹¹ Consult Appendix A for a complete listing of the questions used.

DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH

This study will use a bivariate and a simple multivariate technique to explore the impact of a variety of independent variables on *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization* and *victimization*. Contingency tables with a chi-square measurement of association will also be used. First, the independent variables will be analyzed in a bivariate format to determine which independent variables have a significant effect on the dependent variables. Second, select independent variables will be used in a controlled bivariate (3-way) relationship to assess simple multivariate relationships discussed in the literature. Furthermore, the *perceived risk of victimization* variable will reflect a scale created from questions in the survey. The strength of this scale will be evaluated by examining the interitem correlations, and the item-to-item correlations, which is consistent with prior research in this area (Parker, 1987).

FINDINGS

UNIVARIATE RESULTS

Fear of crime. When asked “How fearful are you of being the victim of a violent crime?”, 19.8 percent of the respondents replied “somewhat”, and 5.4 percent of the respondents replied “very much”. The remaining respondents replied 50.8 percent “very little” and 24.0 percent “never”. The Gallup Poll National Survey in 1993 indicated that 43% of respondents were afraid to walk

alone at night (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 1994: 167). There is a huge disparity between the *fear of crime* levels reported in the NVS and those reported from the Gallup Poll 1993 survey. This difference in fear of crime levels found in these two measures could be a result of differences in establishing a common definition of *fear of crime* and techniques of measurement. This problem has been identified by Hale (1996) as plaguing research in this field. Another possible explanation for the disparity in *fear of crime* levels is that respondents from the Midwest differ from those respondents previously surveyed. This is a mere speculation that would have to be examined in future research studies.

Perceived risk of victimization. When respondents were asked their perceived risk of victimization, 41.6 percent reported no perceived risk, 15.0 percent reported one risk, 11.6 percent reported two risks, and 10.2 percent reported three risks. The remaining respondents reported from four to seven perceived risks of victimizations. There are not any recent national data sets available that have looked at the issue of the perceived risk of victimization. Therefore, it is not possible to compare the frequency of responses with a national survey.

Victimization. Finally, when questions gauged at determining victimization experiences were asked, 70.6 percent of respondent reported no prior

victimization experience, whereas 29.4 percent of respondents reported one or more victimization

experiences. The victimization questions measured both property and personal crimes. The Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 1994, reports that the state of Nebraska is rated 37th in regards to violent crime rates (1995: 317).

Therefore, there are only 14 states that have lower rates of victimization.

BIVARIATE RESULTS

The results of the bivariate contingency table analysis will be discussed in this section. The chi-square statistic is used to test for differences between a sample and some set of expected scores. More specifically, the test is based on differences between observations and expectations for two variables only (Babbie, 1986: 348). This type of analysis is good for comparing the relationship between two variables. The Pearson's R statistic indicates the direction of the relationship. For instance, a positive Pearson's R indicates that either both variables increase or decrease together. However, a negative Pearson's R indicates that as one variable increases, the other decreases. The direction of the relationship is important to understand because knowing there is a relationship is important, but knowing the extent is much more so.

A set of eight independent variables (gender, education, marital status, income, employment, age, where a person resides, and the occupants in the

household) were examined. The dependent variables used for this analysis are: *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization*. The results of the chi-square analysis are presented in Tables 3, 4, and 5. The chi-square analysis will first be discussed for the dependent variable of *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and finally *victimization*.

Hypothesis I (refer to page 45), which states that females will exhibit a higher rate of *fear of crime*, was supported by this analysis. As Table 3 shows, there is a significant relationship between females and males. The chi-square for this comparison is significant at the .000 level and therefore the null hypothesis of no differences is rejected. Females report higher percentages of *fear of crime*, whereas males report lower percentages of *fear of crime*. The percentage of males reporting being “very much fearful” was 2.7 percent, whereas females reporting “very much fearful” was 7.5 percent. In the “somewhat fearful” category, 11.9 percent were male and 26.0 percent were female.

The variable education was not found to be a significant factor in predicting *fear of crime* among respondents ($\chi^2=2.78$; $p=.426$). Therefore Hypothesis II (refer to page 45), which states that education does not have an effect on *fear of crime*, is supported.

Hypothesis III (refer to page 45) states that, where a person resides has an affect on *fear of crime*. Specifically, those who live in an urban area will

exhibit more *fear of crime* than their counterparts who live in rural area. This hypothesis is supported ($\chi^2=10.05$; $p=.018$). For all categories of *fear of crime*, those living in an urban area reported greater amounts of *fear of crime*. The percentage of non-urban respondents who reported being “very much fearful” was 3.7 percent. Whereas urban respondents reported being “very much fearful” was 6.5 percent. The pattern of urban respondents reporting greater *fear of crime* levels was also evident in the “somewhat fearful” category 23.6 percent. Furthermore, non-urban respondents reporting being “somewhat fearful” was 13.8 percent.

Urban areas may influence the perception of crime for respondents who live in those areas. For instance, respondents of urban areas are more likely to visualize the social and physical decay of the inner city. However, although non-urban areas may have the same types of deterioration, this may be viewed as linked more to finances rather than social decay of the environment. Social decay can increase the levels of *fear of crime* because respondents feel that their community is out of control. This out of control feeling leads respondents to feel as though they have no power over the direction of the community.

An examination of Table 3 indicates that Hypothesis IV (refer to page 45) is supported when marital status is compared with *fear of crime* ($\chi^2=8.84$). Therefore, there is a statistical difference at the .05 level between those who are married and those who are unmarried ($p=.031$). The null hypothesis of no

differences among the groups is rejected. Those respondents of a married status reported greater amounts of *fear of crime* for all categories of fear. However, those of a married status also reported being less fearful than those of a non-married status.

There is not a significant relationship when comparing the occupancy of a residence with *fear of crime* ($\chi^2 = 3.39$; $p=.334$). Therefore, Hypothesis V (refer to page 46) stating that respondents who live alone will be more likely to report higher *fear of crime* levels than those that live with others, is not supported.

There is a positive relationship between income and *fear of crime* ($\chi^2=27.71$; $p=.001$). Hypothesis VI (refer to page 46) suggests that, those of a higher income will exhibit less *fear of crime* than those of lower income and socioeconomic status. Those respondents who earned under \$20,000 were more likely to indicate “very much” fear (13.0 percent) than those of an income over \$60,000 (2.3 percent). Respondents of a lower income were generally more likely to report higher levels of *fear of crime*. However, for the “somewhat fearful” category, respondents of an income over \$60,000 reported greater amounts of fear. Based on the significance of the chi-squared test, the null hypothesis is rejected.

When examining Hypothesis VII (refer to page 46), which states that being employed would increase *fear of crime*, a significance between those

employed and those unemployed were not found ($\chi^2=5.49$; $p=.139$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is supported.

Hypothesis VIII (refer to page 46), which states that older persons' display more *fear of crime* than their counterparts is not supported by the chi-square test ($\chi^2=10.13$, $p=.339$). Therefore, the null hypothesis of no difference is supported.

The variable of victim, which measures whether a respondent had been a *victim of crime*, was found to be a significant factor affecting *fear of crime* ($\chi^2=27.23$, $p=.0000$). Those respondents who had prior experience with *victimization* tended to have higher levels of *fear of crime*. Those respondents who had prior experience with *victimization* reported 10.9 percent as "very much" fearful however respondents who had not been a victim of crime reported 3.1 percent. Respondents who had been victims reported higher levels of *fear of crime* than those without prior *victimization* experiences. Therefore, Hypothesis IX (refer to page 46) is supported and the null hypothesis is rejected.

The bivariate findings for factors affecting *fear of crime* have been discussed and now the factors affecting the *perceived risk of victimization* needs to be examined. Gender is the first characteristic that is examined. Hypothesis X (refer to page 46) which states that gender does not have an effect on the *perceived risk of victimization*, is supported ($\chi^2=7.66$; $p=.362$). Although there is not a significant relationship between gender and the *perceived risk of*

victimization, it appears that females were more likely to report perceived risks ranging from zero to three, whereas males were more likely to report the number of perceived risks ranging from four to five.

A significant relationship between educational level and the *perceived risk of victimization* was not supported by the chi-square test ($\chi^2=8.72$; $p=.272$).

Therefore, Hypothesis XI (refer to page 46), stating that educational level will not have an effect on the *perceived risk of victimization* was supported by this test.

The variable urbanization was not found to be a significant factor affecting the *perceived risk of victimization* ($\chi^2=7.76$; $p=.354$). Therefore, Hypothesis XII (refer to page 47), which states that respondents who live in an urban area will be more likely to perceive their risk of victimization as higher than their counterpart was not supported.

Hypothesis XIII (refer to page 47) states that respondents of a married status will view their *perceived risk of victimization* as lower than their counterpart is not supported by the chi square test ($\chi^2=11.05$; $p=.136$). Therefore, there are no differences in responses among respondents of a married or unmarried status.

An examination of Table 4 indicates that Hypothesis XIV (refer to page 47) is not supported when *perceived risk of victimization* is compared with occupancy of a household. The *perceived risk of victimization* does not vary

among those respondents that live alone or with others. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis XV (refer to page 47) stating that, income does not have an effect on the *perceived risk of victimization* is supported through this chi-square comparison ($\chi^2=20.10$; $p=.514$). Therefore, the null hypothesis, of no differences between the groups is accepted.

The variable employment was not found to be a significant factor affecting the *perceived risk of victimization* expressed by respondents ($\chi^2=10.79$; $p=.148$). Therefore, Hypothesis XIV (refer to page 47) which states that employment status does not have an effect on the *perceived risk of victimization*, is supported.

Hypothesis XVII states that, respondents who have been victims of crime will have a greater *perceived risk of victimization* is supported through this chi-square comparison ($\chi^2=66.16$; $p=.000$). Those respondents who reported being a victim of crime had the greatest level of *perceived risk of victimization* "7" 6.2 percent. Furthermore those respondent who were not a victim of crime were less likely to report a level of 7 *perceived risks of victimization*. In addition, those respondents who were victims of crime reported higher *perceived risks of victimization* at all levels.

An examination of Table 4 indicates that Hypothesis XVIII (refer to page 47) is supported when *fear of crime* is compared with the *perceived risk of*

victimization. Respondents who report greater perceived risk of victimization also reported higher percentages of being “very much fearful”. Therefore, based on the chi-square test ($\chi^2=87.2$; $p=.000$) the null hypothesis of no differences is rejected.

The final respondent characteristic looked at to determine the effect on the *perceived risk of victimization* was age. Hypothesis XVIV (refer to page 47) proposed that age does not have an affect on the *perceived risk of victimization*. The chi-square comparison for this variable supports this hypothesis ($\chi^2=26.56$; $p=.185$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is supported

The bivariate findings for factors that affect *fear of crime* and the *perceived risk of victimization* have been discussed and now our attention should be turned to the factors that affect *victimization*. There is a positive relationship between gender and *victimization* experiences ($\chi^2=4.00$; $p=.04$). Hypothesis XX (refer to page 46) suggests that males will be more likely to experience victimization. Male respondents reported victimization experience as 34.2 percent whereas female respondents reported victimization experiences as 25.6 percent. Considering the significance of the chi-squared test, the null hypothesis is thereby rejected.

The variable education was not found to be a significant factor affecting *victimization* experiences ($\chi^2=.610$; $p=.434$). Therefore, Hypothesis XXI (refer to

page 46) that states that educational level will not have an effect on *victimization* is supported.

Hypothesis XXII (refer to page 46) states that, those respondents that live in an urban area will be more likely to experience *victimization*, is supported ($\chi^2=7.23$; $p=.007$). Those respondents that lived in urban areas were more likely to report *victimization* (34.0 percent) whereas those respondents of a non-urban area reported 22.2 percent. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The variable marital status was not found to be a significant factor affecting *victimization* experiences ($\chi^2=2.29$; $p=.129$). Therefore, Hypothesis XXIII (refer to page 46) that states that respondents of a married status will experience a lower *victimization* rate, is not supported by this test.

There is not a significant relationship when comparing *victimization* and occupancy of a household ($\chi^2=2.16$; $p=.140$). Hypothesis XXIV (refer to page 46), which states that those respondents who live alone will be more likely to experience *victimization* was not supported by this test.

There is a positive relationship between income and *victimization* experience ($\chi^2=9.14$; $p=.02$). Hypothesis XXV (refer to page 46) suggests that, those of a higher income will experience less *victimization* than those of a lower income and socioeconomic status. Although the pattern is not clearly defined, an examination of table 3 indicates that those of an income of under \$20,001 and those over \$60,000 experience higher rates of victimization. Based on the

significance of the chi-squared test (.05), the null hypothesis is thereby rejected. However, the relationship that was expected to appear was not found.

Hypothesis XXVI (refer to page 46), states that employment does not have an effect on *victimization* experiences. Therefore, based on the chi square test ($\chi^2=3.53$; $p=.06$), there appears to be no significant affect. However, since the p-value is close to the required .05 level, there may need to be more research conducted on this variable to discover the true effect that it has on *victimization*.

The final variable used to determine the outcome of *victimization* was age. Hypothesis XXVII (refer to page 46), which suggests that those respondents of an older age will experience a lower rate of *victimization*, was supported. The chi square comparison was significant at the .001 level of significance ($\chi^2=17.91$). Respondents who are young adults reported 44.7 percent victimization, whereas respondents of an elderly age reported 17.9 percent victimization. Furthermore, as age increases victimization experience decreases. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The effects of the bivariate analysis are important to understand. As stated earlier, this type of analysis is good for comparing the relationship between two variables. Therefore, it is easy to see and understand the relationship between the variables, since there are only two that need to be examined.

CONTROLLED BIVARIATE RESULTS

The results of the controlled bivariate analysis will be discussed in this section. Bivariate analysis examines the relationship between one independent variable and a dependent variable. However, controlled bivariate analysis is more complex than bivariate analysis because it utilizes more than one independent variable. Instead of explaining the dependent variable on the basis of a single independent variable, two independent variables are used to explain the dependent variable. Specifically, the sample is divided into subgroups based on attributes of both independent variables (Babbie, 1986: 354). These subgroups are then described in terms of the dependent variable. Dividing respondents into subgroups determines whether certain attributes of a variable have direct effects upon the dependent variable (Babbie, 1986: 354).

Hypothesis XXVIII (Gender and *Fear of Crime* Controlled For Age). There is a great amount of literature surrounding the relationship of gender and *fear of crime* when controlled for by age. Lebowitz found that there is a higher level of *fear of crime* among elderly women. Specifically, 65 percent of older females and 25 percent of older males reported high levels of fear of crime (1975: 697). Furthermore, 65 percent of older females and 59 percent of younger females reported high *fear of crime* (1975: 697). LaGrange and Ferraro also tested this relationship and found that older females are more fearful than younger females (1987: 709). Braungart, Braungart and Hoyer also found that women were more

likely to report being fearful of crime than men with only slight increases in fear by age (1980: 59). Specifically, 64 percent of older women were fearful compared to 32 percent of older men (1980: 59). Therefore, with evidence from previous studies of a possible relationship between gender, *fear of crime*, and age it was believed that this relationship would be valuable to examine through the NVS data.

In the bivariate analysis, there was a significant relationship between gender and *fear of crime*. Specifically, women had higher levels of *fear of crime*. However, the controlled bivariate analysis tests this relationship by controlling for another variable. In this case, age was used as the controlling variable for *fear of crime* and gender. Hypothesis XXVIII states that older aged women will fear crime more than women of a younger age. As the findings in Table 7 reveal, the relationship between gender and *fear of crime* was significant for those respondents who were adults and middle adults.

The chi-square comparison is significant at the .05 level for adults. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no differences is rejected. Females reported higher levels of *fear of crime* for all categories, whereas males report lower percentages of *fear of crime*. For those respondents of an adult status, 4.4 percent of females and 3.1 percent of males reported being very fearful of crime. Furthermore, 31.9 percent of females and 13.4 percent of males reported being somewhat fearful of crime.

For those respondents who are considered “middle adult”, 8.3 percent of females reported being very much fearful of crime, whereas 3.0 percent of males reported being very fearful. Similarly, 25.0 percent of females and 9.0 percent of males reported being somewhat fearful of crime. The chi-square for this comparison is significant at the .01 level of significance and therefore the null hypothesis of no differences is rejected.

Hypothesis XXVIV (Gender and *Fear of Crime* controlled for by *Victimization*). Garofalo (1979) and Warr (1984) found that females had lower *victimization* rates while maintaining a higher *fear of crime* level. Therefore it was believed that this would be a significant relationship to examine through the NVS data. Hypothesis XXVIV states that women who have been victimized will fear crime more than men who have been victimized. In the bivariate analysis, gender and *fear of crime* had a significant relationship. Therefore, the controlled bivariate analysis took this relationship one step further by adding the variable of *victimization* to see if the relationship remained significant in light of *victimization* experience. The chi-square for this comparison is significant at the .000 level of significance and therefore the null hypothesis of no differences is rejected. For those respondents who reported not being victimized, 22.5 percent of females and 6.3 percent of males reported being somewhat fearful of crime.¹²

¹² Consult table 8 for a complete listing of the findings

While the relationship between gender and *fear of crime* was significant in light of not being a victim of crime, it was also held in light of *victimization* experience ($\chi^2=13.83$; $p=.003$). In fact, 18.1 percent of victimized females reported being very much fearful of crime, where 4.0 percent of victimized males reported this level.

Hypothesis XXX (Gender and *Perceived Risk of Victimization by Fear of Crime*). There was not a relationship found through the NVS for gender and the *perceived risk of victimization*. However, it was believed that if *fear of crime* was controlled otherwise non-significant relationship would become significant because of the affects of *fear of crime*. Hypothesis XXX states that females who fear crime will have a higher *perceived risk of victimization*. In the bivariate analysis, gender and the *perceived risk of victimization* did not exhibit a significant relationship. Controlling for the variable of *fear of crime* was thought to have an effect upon this relationship. However, as table 9 indicates, gender was not significant even in light of fear of crime.

Hypothesis XXXI (Gender and *Victimization* controlling for Age). Galofalo (1979) found that victimization is related to the *fear of crime* within each age and sex group. Therefore, prior research would support that a relationship exists between gender, *victimization*, and age. Furthermore, the NVS data was used to examine whether this relationship existed with the present data. Therefore, Hypothesis XXXI states that young males will experience more *victimization* than

young females. The bivariate analysis indicates a relationship between gender and *victimization*. Therefore, the controlled bivariate analysis took this relationship one step further by adding the variable of age to see if the relationship remained significant in light of the age of the respondent. The chi-square for this comparison was not significant for these variables when controlled for by age.¹³

It was expected that the relationship between gender and *victimization* would remain significant, especially since the variable of age has a significant relationship with *victimization*. However, this was not the case and the relationship between gender and *victimization* disappeared. This might have happened because when the groups were divided into the subgroups of age and gender, the few respondents who reported *victimization* experience were separated into smaller subgroups and therefore the relationship became non-significant.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that impact *fear of crime*, the *perceived risk of victimization*, and *actual victimization*. Although it is impossible to make a definite determination concerning the extent of the relationship between variables, what is found in this analysis will become part of the growing amount of literature that will reveal a pattern of relationships. The

¹³ Please consult table 10 for a complete listing of findings.

statistical analyses performed on the three dependent variables focused on a number of bivariate and controlled bivariate relationships. The independent variables used in the frequencies, the bivariate analysis, and the controlled bivariate analysis consisted of various demographic characteristics and situational characteristics.

In general, the average respondent in this sample was married, lived with others in a rural area, had an educational level of high school or below, and was employed with an income of \$20,000 to \$40,000. The ratio of non-whites to whites was not representative, with only 3.6 percent of the sample comprising non-whites. This unequal representation is probably due to the fact that the Midwest has a smaller percentage of people from cultural and racial backgrounds. This sample also contained slightly more females (56.2%) than males (43.8%).

One particularly interesting finding was that the average respondent did not report being the victim of crime or see themselves as likely to become one in the future. This finding is surprising given the fact that fear of crime is reported to have become of a foremost concern since the 1960's. However, in the present study this great *fear of crime* was not found. In fact over 50% of the respondents indicated that they were not significantly worried about being a victim of a violent crime.

The fact that *fear of crime* was not a great concern among respondents in this survey is an important finding. If this is the case, then are these respondents different than those previously surveyed. One reason this research may be unique is because the Midwest has rarely been a focus of research. Therefore, Midwestern respondents may differ from those previously studied. How and to what extent these respondents differ is a question that would need to be examined in further research. However, an interesting possibility for this low *fear of crime* could be that previous studies have been measuring something other than *fear of crime*.

DISCUSSION

Respondents in a Gallup Poll National Surveys in 1993 indicated that 43% of respondents were afraid to walk alone at night (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 1994: 167). However in the NVS, 5.4 percent of respondents and 19.8 percent of respondents indicated that they were very much fearful and somewhat fearful of crime. Therefore this study indicates that *fear of crime* is not as pervasive in the state of Nebraska as found in National surveys. This difference in *fear of crime* levels between respondents nationally and those of Nebraska could simply be a function of the dynamics of the state of Nebraska. However, the difference between respondents in Nebraska and those surveyed

as part of National surveys is an issue that needs to be addressed in future research.

The results from this study are important given that research in this area produces contradictory results. These contradictory results are found due to the disparity in defining *fear of crime* and the measurement of *fear of crime*. It is important to make a distinction between emotions and judgments or risks associated with *fear of crime*. While *fear of crime* is a byproduct of judgments and risks, it is a separate issue and to confuse the two produces the contradictory results that are often seen. This study provides a concrete definition for *fear of crime* and the *perceived risk of victimization*. Therefore, the findings from this study provide important implications for research on *fear of crime*, *perceived risk of victimization*, and *victimization*.

Although *fear of crime* was not found to be as pervasive in the state of Nebraska as found in other studies, it is a problem for some residents. Respondents who were found to be particularly affected by fear of crime are females, those with an income of under \$20,000 or over \$60,000, urbanites, and those unmarried respondents. While some of these findings were expected, other findings were very surprising and warrant further discussion of how they related to theories in this field.

The relationship between income and *fear of crime* produced interesting results. It was expected that those of a lower income would have greater *fear of*

crime levels due to the fact that those of a lower income typically live in lower income areas. However this relationship produced somewhat mixed results. On the one hand, those of a lower income had increased levels of fear, however those of higher incomes also had higher levels of *fear of crime*. Perhaps, having a higher income results in acquiring more material items that are desired by others. Respondents therefore feel that having these material items puts them at a higher risk of victimization and therefore increases their *fear of crime*. This high fear of crime for respondents with an income over \$60,000 could also explain the necessity for greater security measures.

The finding of increased *fear of crime* levels for respondents who were married was another interesting finding. It was expected that respondents living alone would have greater *fear of crime* levels because they do not have the security of living with another person. However, one explanation for the increased *fear of crime* for married respondents is that these respondents fear crime befalling to their partner. Furthermore, these respondents have a greater *fear of crime* in relation to their partner than they have for themselves.

The final significant finding in relation to *fear of crime* was the variable of urbanization. Respondents of an urban area had increased fear of crime levels. The perceived disorder theory states that those who see signs of physical and social decay will have increased fear of crime. While there are no direct questions gauged at physical and social decay within the NVS, an argument can

be made that respondents of urban areas are more likely to see signs of physical and social decay. Furthermore, a distinction needs to be made between the decay visualized in urban areas versus decay of rural areas. The decline of rural areas may be seen as linked to financial decline rather than physical and social decay. However as explained earlier, the decline of urban areas is more likely to be associated with physical and social decay linked to crime.

Research often indicates that the elderly has a profound *fear of crime*. However, this relationship between fear of crime and age was not found in this present study. Furthermore it was felt that if the relationship between gender and *fear of crime* was examined controlling for age, then a relationship that was not apparent in the bivariate analysis would appear. What was found was that the relationship between gender and fear was significant when age was controlled. However, this relationship was only significant for the age categories of middle adult and adult. This is an interesting finding given that there is a great amount of research conducted on the fear of the elderly. One explanation for this finding is that perhaps the elderly are not as vulnerable as previously thought. The elderly female respondents in this study could be located within non-urban areas and this location of residence affects their fear of crime levels. Another possible explanation for the difference in fear by age category may be that elderly respondents actually are less vulnerable than previously thought. Perhaps elderly respondents are less mobile than other respondents in this

study. These are very important questions which would need to be examined in future research studies.

Factors identified as having an impact on victimization were consistent with past research in this field. While research examining factors affecting fear of crime is contradictory, this is not found in regards to victimization. Typically victimization experience is easily measured because there are not theoretical issues about how this variable should be measured. Therefore, the findings of the NVS study found that gender, urbanization, income, and age are factors affecting victimization experience. The indirect victimization theory states that those most vulnerable will be victimized. However, the findings from the NVS provide incomplete support for this theory. Partial support for the indirect victimization theory is established by the increased victimization rates for respondents with an income of over \$60,000, and respondents living in an urban area. For instance, as explained in relation to *fear of crime* respondents who have a higher income may actually experience more *victimization* because they acquire material items not easily attainable by lower income respondents. Furthermore, the NVS indicates that males, and respondents of a younger age are more likely to be victimized. Although this is consistent with prior research, these findings do not provide support for the indirect victimization theory. It is typically thought that females and the elderly are more vulnerable to crime.

Urbanization was found to affect *victimization*. Prior research suggests that where in a city a person lives determines how and to what extent this individual will experience *victimization*. While the urbanization was found to affect *fear of crime*, it is also found to affect *victimization*. What does this tell us about those that live in an urban area? It tells us that these residents experience a great amount of *victimization* and therefore, they have increased levels of *fear of crime*.

When gender and fear were controlled for *victimization*, a strong relationship appeared indicating that females are more fearful regardless of *victimization* experience. However, *victimization* experience does increase the levels of *fear of crime* for females. Furthermore, *fear of crime* increases slightly for males when controlled for *victimization* experience. This plainly indicates that females are more fearful of crime than males regardless of their experiences.

There has been some very interesting results found in relation to fear of crime and victimization. However the perceived risk of victimization produced less surprising results. The only variables that were found to affect the *perceived risk of victimization* were *victimization* and *fear of crime*. It is gathered that those that are more fearful of crime will also perceive their risk of victimization to be high. Furthermore, while this association was found, the factors that affect *fear of crime* and *victimization* did not affect the *perceived risk of victimization*. In fact, the analysis of the data indicate that there are not any characteristic affects

of respondents that would impact this variable. However, the finding that situational characteristics affects this variable provides support for past research.

Although this research is preliminary and exploratory in nature, it still exposes some interesting relationships. The single most important finding from this research indicates that fear of crime is not an overwhelming concern of Nebraska residents. Although fear of crime is not as pervasive in the state of Nebraska as found in national surveys, it is still a problem that needs to be addressed. It is important to discuss ways that could be aimed at reducing *fear of crime* for those respondents indicating high fear of crime.

There is no single approach to reducing *fear of crime* that would work for every community. However, a policy strategy that includes several approaches to *fear of crime* could help to reduce a great portion of this fear. One approach would be to provide more information about crime rates and the risk of being victimized. It is interesting to note that the overall crime rate has been decreasing for the last 15 years. However, this is rarely a broadcast featured on the news and through other social networks.

Another approach to reducing *fear of crime* would be to remove any signs of physical or social decay. This could be easily accomplished by destroying abandoned buildings and trying to improve the environment, especially in inner city areas. If communities could be empowered to take responsibility for their neighborhoods through a common effort, then crime could be reducing. The

visibility of the police provides a sense of security for residents. However, it is often found that the police patrol high crime area while not providing the same levels of patrol for other areas. Residents notice the presence of police and the police need to be available to residents. This availability could be in the form of foot patrol or in the form of regular attendance at neighborhood meetings.

While some of these policy suggestions are instituted by some cities, there is not indication of a collective policy within the state of Nebraska. Policy initiatives in one area will have little effect on other areas in the state of Nebraska. Therefore it is important for the state as a whole to combine forces to tackle this problem. Even though *fear of crime* has not been found to be an overwhelming problem in the state of Nebraska, it is a problem that needs to be addressed. In future research a common definition of *fear of crime* and the *perceived risk of victimization* needs to be established. Furthermore, future research needs to confront the differing ways of measuring these variables and establish a common measurement strategy.

References

- Akers, Ronald, Anthony J. LaGreca, Christine Sellers, and John Cochran
1987 Fear of crime and victimization among the elderly in different types of communities. *Criminology*, 25: 487-505.
- Babbie, Earle
1986 The Practice of Social Research. Wadsworth Publishing Co., Belmont California
- Balkin, Steven
1979 Victimization rates, safety, and fear of crime. *Social Problems*, 26:343-358.
- Baumer, Terry L.
1978 Research on fear of crime in the U.S. *Victimology* 3: 254-64.
- Biderman, A.D., & J.P. Lynch
1991 Understanding Crime Incidence Statistics: Why the UCR diverges from the NCS. Springer-Verlag New York, Inc.
- Braungart, Margaret, Richard Braungart, and William Hoyer
1980 Age, sex, and social factors in fear of crime. *Sociological Focus*, 13:55-66.
- Bureau of Justice Statistics
1995 The Nation's Two Crime Measures. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.
- 1996 Criminal Victimization, 1994. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Clemente, Frank and Michael B. Kleiman,
1977 Fear of crime in the United States: A multivariate analysis. *Social Forces*, 56:519-531.
- Dillman, Don A., et al.
1995 Effects of category order on answers in mail and telephone surveys. *Rural Sociology*, 60:674-688.

Donnelly, Patrick G.

1988 Individual and neighborhood Influences on fear of crime.
Sociological Focus 22:69-85.

Ennis, Phillip H.

1967 Criminal Victimization in the United States: A report of a National Survey. National Opinion Research Center, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C.

Ferraro, Kenneth F. and Randy L. LaGrange

1987 The measurement of fear of crime. *Sociological Inquiry* 57:70-101.

Garofalo, James

1979 Victimization and the fear of crime. *Journal of Research on Crime and Delinquency*, 16: 80-97.

1981 The fear of crime: Causes and consequences. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 72:839-857.

Garofalo, James and John Laub

1978 The fear of crime: Broadening our perspective. *Victimology* 3:242-253.

Hale, C

1996 Fear of Crime: A Review of the literature. *International Review of Victimology*, 4: 79-150.

Jeffords, C.R.

1983 The situational relationship between age and the fear of crime. *International Journal of Aging & Human Development*, 17: 103-111.

Keane, C.

1995 Victimization and fear: assessing the role of offender and offense. *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, 37: 431-455.

LaGrange, Randy and Kenneth Ferraro

1989 Assessing age and gender differences in perceived risk and fear of crime. *Criminology*, 27: 697-719.

- Lebowitz, Berry
1975 Age and fearfulness: Personal and situational factors. *Journal of Gerontology* 30:696-700.
- Lee, Gary
1982 Residential location and fear of crime among the elderly. *Rural Sociology* 47: 655-669.
- Liska, Allen E., Joseph J. Lawrence, and Andrew Sanchirico
1982 Fear of crime as a social fact. *Social Forces* 60: 760-770.
- Liska, Allen E., Andrew Sanchirico, and Mark D. Reed
1988 Fear of crime and constrained behavior specifying and estimating a reciprocal effects model. *Social Forces* 66:827-837.
- McCoy, H.V., J.D. Wooldredge, F.T. Cullen, P.J. Dubeck, S.L. Browning
1996 Lifestyles of the old and not so fearful: life situation and older persons' fear of crime. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 24: 191-15.
- Moeller, Gertrude L.
1989 Fear of criminal victimization: The effect of neighborhood racial composition. *Sociological Inquiry*, 59(2), 208-221.
- O'Brien, Robert M.
1985 Crime and Victimization Data. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Ollenburger, Jane C.
1981 Criminal victimization and fear of crime. *Research on Aging*, 1:101-118.
- Ortega, Suzanne T. and Jessie L. Myles
1987 Race and gender effects on fear of crime: An interactive model with age. *Criminology* 25:133-152.
- Parker, Kenneth D.
1987 Black-white differences in perceptions of fear of crime. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 128(4), 487-494.
- Parker, Kenneth D., Barbara J. McMorris, Earl Smith, and Komanduri S. Murty
1991 Fear of crime and the likelihood of victimization: A bi-ethnic comparison. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 133(5), 723-732.

- Riley, Mary
1997 Interview by author 29 July 1997, Colorado, FBI statistical support staff.
- Rountree, Pamela W., Kenneth C. Land
1996 Perceived risk versus fear of crime: empirical evidence of conceptually distinct reactions in survey data. *Social Forces*, 74: 1353-1376.
- Skogan, Wesley G.
1977 The Fear of Crime. The American Political Science Association.

1987 The impact of victimization on fear. *Crime and Delinquency*, 33, 1: 135-154.
- Stafford, Mark C. and Omer R. Galle
1984 Victimization rates, exposure to risk, and fear of crime. *Criminology*, 22:173-185.
- Strausberg, Maura
1997 Interview by author 3 July 1997, Princeton N.J., Library Specialist.
- Taylor, Ralph B., Margaret Hale
1986 Testing alternative models of fear of crime. *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 77: 151-189.
- U.S. Department of Justice
1975 Criminal Victimization Surveys in the Nation's Five Largest Cities. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C. 20402.

1981 Issues in the Measurement of Victimization. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C.
- Walklate, Sandra
1990 Researching victims of crime: Critical Victimology. *Social Justice* 3:25-42.

Warr, Mark

1990 Dangerous situation: social context and fear of victimization. *Social Forces* 68: 891-907.

1984 Fear of Victimization: why are women and the elderly more afraid? *Social Science Quarterly* : 681-702

Will, J.A., & J.H. McGrath

1995 Crime, neighborhood perceptions, and the underclass: the relationship between fear of crime and class position. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 23:163-176.

APPENDIX A
Questionnaire

Interviewer Initials: _____
Interview #: _____
Telephone #: _____

[...]---Notes for Interviewer

NA --Not Applicable

DK --Don't Know

NC --Not Codeable

NR --No Response

A. [To person answering the phone, say]

Hello, my name is _____. I'm working with the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Department of Criminal Justice in conjunction with the Nebraska Crime Commission. We are surveying citizens across the state in order to assess their opinions and attitudes on crime. Would you be able to tell me if I have reached _____.
[REPEAT PHONE NUMBER]

Are you 18 years of age or older? [IF NOT, IS THERE SOMEONE WHO IS 18 YEARS OR OLDER THAT I COULD SPEAK WITH?] [IF YES, REPEAT INTRODUCTION. IF NO, THANK AND TERMINATE INTERVIEW.] Your phone number has been randomly selected. Let me assure you that your responses will be confidential and anonymous--as by law they must. The interview will only take about 10-15 minutes. Feel free to ask questions at any time.

1. Is there any area right around your home--that is, within a mile--where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?

1... No
2... Yes
2. How much does fear of crime prevent you from doing things you would like to do? Would you say...[READ LIST]

1... Very Much
2... Somewhat
3... Rarely, or
4... Never [not at all]
3. When you leave your home or apartment, how often do you think about being robbed or physically assaulted? Would you say... [READ LIST]

1... Very often
2... Sometimes
3... Rarely, or
4... Never [not at all]
4. When you leave your home, how often do you think about it being broken into or vandalized while you're away? Would you say... [READ LIST]

1... Very often
2... Sometimes
3... Rarely, or
4... Never [not at all]
5. How much do you worry that your loved ones will be hurt by criminals? Would you say...[READ LIST]

1... Very much
2... Somewhat
3... Rarely, or
4... Never [not at all]
6. When you're in your home, how often do you feel afraid of being attacked or assaulted? Would you say...[READ LIST]

1... Very often
2... Sometimes
3... Rarely, or
4... Never [not at all]

7. How fearful are you of being the victim of a violent crime?
Would you say...[READ LIST]

1... Very much
2... Somewhat
3... Very little, or
4... Never [not at all]

8. Answering Yes or NO, do you think any of the following are likely to happen to you during the next year?

Yes No

1	2	Someone breaking into your home and taking something or attempting to take something.
1	2	Someone stealing or attempting to steal a motor vehicle belonging to you.
1	2	Someone stealing other property or valuable things belonging to you.
1	2	Someone taking something from you by force or threat of force.
1	2	Someone beating or attacking you with a knife, gun, club or other weapon.
1	2	Someone threatening you with their fist, feet or other bodily attack.
1	2	Someone forcing you to have sexual intercourse with them against your will.
1	2	Being beaten or attacked by a member of your family or someone in your household.

9. Over the past three years, do you believe the violent crime problem in your community has...[READ LIST]

1... Gotten better
2... Stayed about the same
3... Gotten worse

10. During the next three years, do you believe the violent crime problem in your community will...[READ LIST]

1... Get better
2... Stay about the same
3... Become worse

11. How would you rate the job being done by law enforcement in your community? Would you say they are doing an...[READ LIST]

- 1... Excellent
- 2... Good
- 3... Fair, or
- 4... Poor job

12. Which of the following do you believe are responsible for our violent crime problem? [READ LIST AND CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY]

- 1... Criminal justice system is too easy
- 2... Breakdown of family life
- 3... population increase
- 4... Moral decay
- 5... Use of drugs
- 6... Domestic violence
- 7... Television and movie violence
- 8... Availability of guns
- 9... The economy
- 10... Too much leisure time
- 11... Gangs
- 12... Use of alcohol
- 13... Parental discipline
- 14... Other, specify _____

13. Which substances do you feel contribute most to the violent crime problem in your community? [READ LIST AND CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY]

- 1... Cocaine
- 2... Crack cocaine
- 3... Heroin
- 4... Marijuana
- 5... Alcohol
- 6... Other drugs, specify _____

The following questions refer only to things that happened to you during 1995 in Nebraska, between January 1 and December 31, 1995:

14. Did anyone take something directly from you by using force, such as by a stick-up, mugging or threat?

- 1... No [IF NO, SKIP TO Q#15]
- 2... Yes

14a. For this incident, or the most recent of these incidents, was it done by...[READ LIST]

- 1... A stranger or unknown person
- 2... A casual acquaintance
- 3... A person well know to you (but not a family member)
- 4... A family member

15. Other than any incidents already mentioned...Did anyone threaten to beat you up or threaten you with a knife or some other weapon NOT including telephone threats.

- 1... No [IF NO, SKIP TO Q#16]
- 2... Yes

15a. For this incident, or the most recent of these incidents, was it done by...[READ LIST]

- 1... A stranger or unknown person
- 2... A casual acquaintance
- 3... A person well know to you (but not a family member)
- 4... A family member

16. Other than any incident already mentioned...Did anyone hit you, attack you or beat you up?

- 1... No [IF NO, SKIP TO Q#17]
- 2... Yes

16a. For this incident, or the most recent of these incidents, was it done by...[READ LIST]

- 1... A stranger or unknown person
- 2... A casual acquaintance
- 3... A person well know to you (but not a family member)
- 4... A family member

17. Did anyone force you, or attempt to force you, to have sexual intercourse with them?

- 1... No [IF NO, SKIP TO Q#18]
- 2... Yes

17a. For this incident, or the most recent of these incidents, was it done by...[READ LIST]

- 1... A stranger or unknown person
- 2... A casual acquaintance
- 3... A person well known to you (but not a family member)
- 4... A family member

18. Other than those incidents already mentioned...Did anyone force you, or attempt to force you, to engage in any unwanted sexual activity?
- 1... No [IF NO, SKIP TO Q#19]
2... Yes
- 18a. For this incident, or the most recent of these incidents, was it done by...[READ LIST]
1... A stranger or unknown person
2... A casual acquaintance
3... A person well known to you (but not a family member)
4... A family member
19. Other than any incident already mentioned...Did anyone try to attack you in some other way?
- 1... No [IF NO, SKIP TO Q#20]
2... Yes
- 19a. For this incident, or the most recent of these incidents, was it done by...[READ LIST]
1... A stranger or unknown person
2... A casual acquaintance
3... A person well known to you (but not a family member)
4... A family member
20. Did anyone break in or try to break into your car or truck, home or some other building on your property?
- 1... No
2... Yes
21. Did anyone damage, steal or try to steal something that belonged to you?
- 1... No
2... Yes
22. Were you the victim of an automobile crash involving a drunk driver?
- 1... No
2... Yes
23. Were any of your close relatives homicide victims?
- 1... No
2... Yes

In Nebraska, there are agencies designed specifically to help victims of crime. These victim assistance agencies are sometimes known as Victim/Witness Units, Domestic Violence Programs, Sexual Assault Programs or perhaps other names. These agencies may provide services such as explanations of the criminal justice system and how each victim's case will be handled, they may accompany a victim or witness to court, they may provide shelter for victims, or they may provide many other services. The next series of questions seek your opinion and insight regarding victim assistance agencies in Nebraska.

24. Are you aware of any Victim/Witness Units, Domestic Violence Programs, or Sexual Assault Programs whom you could contact or where you could go when you need help or services as a victim of crime?

- 1... No [IF NO, SKIP TO Q#26]
- 2... Yes

25. And where would that be? [CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY]

- 1... Victim Assistance agency/Domestic Violence program, or Sexual Assault program
- 2... Shelter
- 3... Police
- 4... Church
- 5... Fire station
- 6... Schools
- 7... Other [LIST] _____

26. Have you been a victim of crime since living in Nebraska?

- 1... Yes [CONTINUE]
- 2... No [SKIP TO Q#38]

27. After you became a victim, did you know that there were victim assistance programs which could help you?

- 1... No
- 2... Yes

28. Have you ever received help from a victim assistance agency in Nebraska?

- 1... No + 933
- 2... Yes

Which Agencies: 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

29. How did you find out about the victim assistance agency? [DON'T READ]

- 1... Law enforcement
- 2... County attorney
- 3... Doctor
- 4... Hospital
- 5... Friend or relative
- 6... Newspaper
- 7... Television or radio
- 8... Victim assistance agency contacted you
- 9... Other means (Please Describe) _____
- 10.. Did not find out about a victim assistance agency

30. Below is a list of services offered by many victim programs throughout the state. Please tell me which ones were provided to you when you were a crime victim. [READ LIST AND CIRCLE ALL MENTIONS]

- 1... Emergency help through a telephone crisis line
- 2... Provided shelter
- 3... On-scene help
- 4... Helped get repairs to home or office
- 5... Financial help
- 6... Counseling through a telephone crisis line
- 7... Group counseling
- 8... Individual counseling
- 9... Support group
- 10.. Referral to other service agencies for help (such as food bank, social services, medical facilities, etc.)
- 11.. Supportive listening
- 12.. Accompanied you to county Attorney's office
- 13.. Property return
- 14.. Employer intervention
- 15.. Legal assistance
- 16.. Transportation
- 17.. Helped in preparing or filing a Protection Order
- 18.. Explained how the criminal justice system works and how the case would be handled
- 19.. Information about the status of the case
- 20.. Intervention with landlord, utility company or other debts
- 21.. Helped filing insurance forms
- 22.. Helped with claims for Crime Victims' compensation program
- 23.. Explanation of court proceedings
- 24.. Accompanied to court
- 25.. Helped complete Victim Impact Statement
- 26.. Notification about offender's Parole hearing
- 27.. Any other services provided I haven't mentioned? [LIST] / .
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

31. Overall, how would you rate the services you were provided by the victim assistance agency? Would you say...[READ LIST]

- 1... Excellent
- 2... Good
- 3... Fair, or
- 4... Poor

32. What services do you believe were needed but were not provided?
[READ LIST AND CIRCLE ALL MENTIONS]

- 1... Emergency help through a telephone crisis line
- 2... Provided shelter
- 3... On-scene help
- 4... Helped get repairs to home or office
- 5... Financial help
- 6... Counseling through a telephone crisis line
- 7... Group counseling
- 8... Individual counseling
- 9... Support group
- 10.. Referral to other service agencies for help (such as food bank, social services, medical facilities, etc.)
- 11.. Supportive listening
- 12.. Accompanied you to county Attorney's office
- 13.. Property return
- 14.. Employer intervention
- 15.. Legal assistance
- 16.. Transportation
- 17.. Helped in preparing or filing a Protection Order
- 18.. Explained how the criminal justice system works and how the case would be handled
- 19.. Information about the status of the case
- 20.. Intervention with landlord, utility company or other debts
- 21.. Helped filing insurance forms
- 22.. Helped with claims for Crime Victims' compensation program
- 23.. Explanation of court proceedings
- 24.. Accompanied to court
- 25.. Helped complete Victim Impact Statement
- 26.. Notification about offender's Parole hearing
- 27.. Any other services provided you that I haven't mentioned?

[LIST]

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

For these next set of questions, think about the last time you were victimized.

33. Where did the victimization occur? [DON'T READ BUT CIRCLE MOST APPROPRIATE DESCRIPTION]

- 1... Your home or apartment
- 2... Offender's home or apartment
- 3... Some other residence
- 4... On the street
- 5... In a parking lot
- 6... At a business location
- 7... At a bar
- 8... Other specify _____

34. Did you think the offender was under the influence of alcohol or drugs?

- 1... No
- 2... Yes
- 3... Don't Know

35. If you did not report the crime to law enforcement, what was the primary reason for not reporting it? [DON'T READ]

- 1... Afraid of offender
- 2... Dealt with another way
- 3... Not important enough - minor offense
- 4... Felt sorry for the offender
- 5... Crime due to my own carelessness
- 6... Did not want to get involved
- 7... Police couldn't or wouldn't do anything
- 8... No confidence in the justice system
- 9... Did not know how to report the crime
- 10.. Did not have a telephone or available transportation
- 11.. Other, specify _____

36. Do you know if the crime was prosecuted, in other words, did the offender go to court?

- 1... No
- 2... Yes

Now I have just a few final questions for classification purposes only:

38. In what year were you born? _____
39. What is your gender?
- 1... Male
 - 2... Female
40. To what racial or ethnic group do you belong? Are you...[READ]
- 1... White
 - 2... African American/Black
 - 3... Asian (Oriental)
 - 4... Native American
 - 5... Hispanic
 - 6... Refused [DON'T READ]
 - 7... NC/NA
41. What was the last grade, or year of school that you completed? [DON'T READ]
- 1... Grade 8 or less
 - 2... High school, High school graduate
 - 3... Undergraduate, Undergraduate degree
 - 4... Graduate, Graduate degree
 - 5... Professional School (Law, Medicine, etc.)
 - 6... Technical or Associate Degree
 - 7... Other, specify _____
42. Which best describes where you live? Would you say...[READ LIST]
- 1... Rural area
 - 2... Town away from an urban area
 - 3... Suburb of urban area
 - 4... In a city but not in the central area .
 - 5... Central area of a city
43. What is your present marital status? [DON'T READ]
- 1... Married
 - 2... Single, never married
 - 3... Divorced/Separated
 - 4... Widowed
 - 5... Refused

44. How many people live in your home or apartment?

- 1... Live alone
- 2... one
- 3... two
- 4... three
- 5... four or more

45. Of these categories, which best describes your total family income? **[READ LIST]**

- 1... Under \$10,000
- 2... \$10,001 to \$20,000
- 3... \$20,001 to \$40,000
- 4... \$40,001 to \$60,000
- 5... Over \$60,000

46. What is your present employment status? Are you...**[READ LIST AND CIRCLE ONLY ONE]**

- 1... Employed full time
- 2... Employed part time
- 3... Homemaker
- 4... Student
- 5... Unemployed
- 6... Retired
- 7... Other

47. What is your zip code? _____

Thank you for completing this survey. Your cooperation in answering these questions will help in the fight against crime in Nebraska.

Table 1. Recoding of Victimization Data¹

Variable	Recoding	N	%
Gender	Male	219	43.8
	Female	281	56.2
Racial	White	482	97.4
	Non-white	13	2.6
Education	H.S. or below	241	50.6
	Some college	235	49.4
Live	Urban	189	62.0
	Non-urban	309	38.0
Marital status	Married	354	71.1
	Non-married	144	28.9
Occupant	Live alone	51	10.3
	Live with others	444	89.7
Income	\$0 to \$20,000	108	21.6
	\$20,001 to \$40,000	156	31.2
	\$40,001 to \$60,000	100	20.0
	over \$60,000	88	17.6
Employment	Not employed	163	33.2
	Employed	328	66.8
Age	Young adult	38	7.6
	Adult	188	37.6
	Middle adult	151	30.2
	Elderly	123	24.6
Victim of crime	Not a victim	353	70.6
	Victim	147	29.4
Fear of Crime	Very much	27	5.4
	Somewhat	99	19.8
	Very little	254	50.8
	Never	120	24.0

¹ The highest percentage of missing for any of the variables was under 5%, therefore the missing percentages are not included. Furthermore, the higher percentage of missing (4.8 percent) was for the variable of education.

Perceived Risk	No risk of victimization	208	41.6
	One perceived risk	75	15.0
	Two perceived risks	58	11.6
	Three perceived risks	51	10.2
	Four perceived risks	45	9.0
	Five perceived risks	14	2.8
	Six perceived risks	27	5.4
	Seven perceived risks	17	3.4

Table 2. Expected Findings from the Nebraska Survey

	Fear of Crime	Perceived Risk of Victimization	Actual Victimization
Race/Ethnicity	+	+	+
Age	+	D	-
Gender	+	D	+
Income	-	D	-
Education	-	D	D
Urbanization	+	+	+
Marital Status	+	+	+
Employment	D	D	D
Occupant	+	+	+

1. Positive relationship expected(+)
2. Negative relationship expected (-)
3. Relationship expectation unknown (D)

Table 3. Bivariate Analysis of Respondent Characteristics Associated with Fear of being a Victim of Crime

	Very much	Some-what	Very little	Never	Freq.	CHISQ	P-Value
Gender						27.35	.000
Male	2.7	11.9	53.9	31.5	219		
Female	7.5	26.0	48.4	18.1	281		
Education¹						2.78	.426
H.S. or less	6.6	19.1	49.4	24.9	241		
Some college	3.4	20.9	51.5	24.3	235		
Live						10.05	.018
Non-urban	3.7	13.8	55.0	27.5	189		
Urban	6.5	23.6	47.9	22.0	309		
Marital Status						8.84	.031
Married	4.0	18.1	54.0	24.0	354		
Non-married	9.0	23.6	43.1	24.3	144		
Occupant¹						3.392	.334
Live alone	7.8	27.5	47.1	17.6	51		
Live with others	5.2	18.9	51.1	24.8	444		
Income¹						27.71	.001
\$0-\$20,000	13.0	20.4	39.8	26.9	108		
\$20,001-\$40,000	3.2	19.9	52.6	24.4	156		
\$40,001-\$60,000	3.0	14.0	63.0	20.0	100		
\$60,000+	2.3	28.4	45.5	23.9	88		
Age¹						10.13	.339
Young adult	10.5	26.3	42.1	21.1	38		
Adult	3.7	22.3	51.6	22.3	188		
Middle adult	6.0	17.9	55.0	21.2	151		
Elderly	5.7	16.3	47.2	30.9	123		
Employment						5.494	.139
Not employed	4.3	18.4	47.2	30.1	163		
Employed	6.1	20.4	52.7	20.7	328		

¹ Small cell sizes may be distorting the chi-square test

Table 4. Bivariate Analysis of Respondent Characteristics Associated with Perceived Risk of Victimization¹

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Freq.	CHISQ	P-Value
Gender ²										7.66	.362
Male	38.0	15.7	13.4	10.6	10.6	3.7	6.0	1.9	216		
Female	45.2	14.7	10.4	10.0	7.9	2.2	5.0	4.7	279		
Education ²										8.72	.272
H.S. or less	43.9	11.8	11.8	10.5	8.9	2.1	6.3	4.6	237		
Some college	40.6	19.2	12.0	9.0	8.5	3.8	4.7	2.1	234		
Live ²										7.76	.35
Non-urban	44.9	13.9	13.9	11.2	5.9	3.2	4.8	2.1	187		
Urban	40.4	16.0	10.4	9.4	11.1	2.6	5.9	4.2	307		
Marital Status										11.05	.136
Married	45.6	14.0	10.0	9.4	10.0	2.3	5.7	3.1	351		
Non-Married	33.8	16.9	16.2	12.7	7.0	4.2	4.9	4.2	142		
Occupant ²										4.47	.724
Live alone	41.2	19.6	15.7	9.8	5.9		5.9	2.0	51		
Live with others	42.6	14.4	10.9	10.3	9.6	3.2	5.5	3.6	439		

¹A Scale was created from a list of seven questions pertaining to whether certain acts of victimization were likely to happen within the next year. Respondents answering affirmatively to one victimization act likely to happen within the next year received a one rating, those that answered affirmatively to two acts of victimization likely to happen to them within the next year received a two rating, and so on. Those respondents that felt that no acts of victimization were likely to happen to them within the next year were given a rating of zero.

²Small cell sizes may be distorting the Chi Square test

Table 5. Bivariate Analysis of Respondent Characteristics Associated with Victimization

	Not a Victim of Crime	Victim of Crime	Frequency	CHISQ	P-Value
Gender				4.004	.045
Male	65.8	34.2	219		
Female	74.4	25.6	281		
Education				.61076	.434
H.S. or less	72.6	27.4	241		
Some college	68.9	31.1	235		
Live				7.2388	.0071
Non-urban	77.8	22.2	189		
Urban	66.0	34.0	309		
Marital Status				2.296	.129
Married	72.6	27.4	354		
Non-married	65.3	34.7	144		
Occupant				2.169	.140
Live alone	80.4	19.6	51		
Live with others	69.4	30.6	444		
Income²				9.1427	.027
\$0-\$20,000	73.1	26.9	108		
\$20,001-\$40,000	75.6	24.4	156		
\$40,001-\$60,000	76.0	24.0	100		
\$60,000+	59.1	40.9	88		
Age				17.91	.000
Young adult	55.3	44.7	38		
Adult	63.3	36.7	188		
Middle adult	74.2	25.8	151		
Elderly	82.1	17.9	123		
Employment				3.535	.060
Not employed	76.1	23.9	163		
Employed	67.4	32.6	328		

² Small cell sizes may be distorting the chi-square test

Table 6. Gender by Fear of Crime Controlled for Age

	Male		Female		Young Adult		Adult*		Middle Adult**		Elderly	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
FEAR OF CRIME												
Very Fearful	6	21	0	4	3	4	2	7	1	6		
	2.7%	7.5%	0%	22.2%	3.1%	4.4%	3.0%	8.3%	2.9%	6.8%		
Somewhat Fearful	26	73	4	6	13	29	6	21	3	17		
	11.9%	26.0%	20.0%	33.3%	13.4%	31.9%	9.0%	25.0%	8.6%	19.3%		
Little Fear	118	136	10	6	54	43	38	45	16	42		
	53.9%	48.4%	50.0%	33.3%	55.7%	47.3%	56.7%	53.6%	45.7%	47.7%		
Never	69	51	6	2	27	15	21	11	15	23		
	31.5%	18.1%	30.0%	11.1%	27.8%	16.5%	31.3%	13.1%	42.9%	26.1%		
Total	219	281	20	18	97	91	67	84	35	88		
	100.0%	100.0%	%100.0	%100.0	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

* P< 0.05

** P< 0.01

*** P< 0.001

Table 7 . Gender by Fear of Crime controlled for Victimization

	Male		Female		Victim**		Non-victim***	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
FEAR OF CRIME								
Very Fearful	6 2.7%	21 7.5%	3 4.0%	13 18.1%	3 2.1%	8 3.8%		
Somewhat Fearful	26 11.9%	73 26.0%	17 22.7%	26 36.1%	9 6.3%	47 22.5%		
Little Fear	118 53.9%	136 48.4%	38 50.7%	21 29.2%	80 55.6%	115 55.0%		
Never	69 31.5%	51 18.1%	17 22.7%	12 16.7%	52 36.1%	39 18.7%		
Total	219 100.0%	281 100.0%	75 100.0%	72 100.0%	144 100.0%	209 100.0%		

* P< 0.05

** P< 0.01

*** P< 0.001

Table 8. Gender by the Perceived Risk of Victimization controlled for Fear of Crime

	Male		Female		Very Fearful		Somewhat Fearful		Little Fearful		Never Fearful	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
PERCEIVED RISK OF VICTIMIZATION												
0 Perceived risk	82	126		4	1	17	41	70	40	35		
	38.0%	45.2%		19.0%	3.8%	23.9%	35.7%	51.5%	58.0%	68.6%		
1 Perceived risk	34	41		2	3	12	22	23	9	4		
	15.7%	14.7%		9.5%	11.5%	16.9%	19.1%	16.9%	13.0%	7.8%		
2 Perceived risk	29	29	1	2	6	8	14	15	8	4		
	13.4%	10.4%	16.7%	9.5%	23.1%	11.3%	12.2%	11.0%	11.6%	7.8%		
3 Perceived risk	23	28		3	2	10	15	11	6	4		
	10.6%	10.0%		14.3%	7.7%	14.1%	13.0%	8.1%	8.7%	7.8%		
4 Perceived risk	23	22	2	5	6	9	11	6	4	2		
	10.6%	7.9%	33.3%	23.8%	23.1%	12.7%	9.6%	4.4%	5.8%	3.9%		
5 Perceived risk	8	6	1	1	3	4	4	1				
	3.7%	2.2%	16.7%	4.8%	11.5%	5.6%	3.5%	.7%				
6 Perceived risk	13	14	2		3	6	7	6	1	2		
	6.0%	5.0%	33.3%		11.5%	8.5%	6.1%	4.4%	1.4%	3.9%		
7 Perceived risk	4	13		4	2	5	1	4	1			
	1.9%	4.7%		19.0%	7.7%	7.0%	.9%	2.9%	1.4%			
Total	216	279	6	21	26	71	115	136	69	51		
	100.0%	100.0%	%100.0	%100.0	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

* P<0.05

** P<0.01

*** P<0.001

Table 9. Gender by Victimization controlled for Age

	Male		Female		Young Adult		Adult*		Middle Adult**		Elderly	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
VICTIM												
No	144	209	10	11	56	63	49	63	29	72		
	40.8	59.2	50.0	61.1	57.7	69.2	73.1	75.0	82.9	81.8		
Yes	75	72	10	7	41	28	18	21	6	16		
	59.2	49.0	50.0	38.9	42.3	30.8	26.9	25.0	17.1	18.2		
Total	219	281	20	18	97	91	67	84	35	88		
	100.0%	100.0%	%100.0	%100.0	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

* P<0.05

** P<0.01

*** P<0.001